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THE OATH OF REVENGE.

NAPOLEON IN GERMANY.

NAPOLEON

AND THE

QUEEN OF PRUSSIA.

AN HISTORICAL NOVEL.

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN, BY

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NAPOLEON AND QUEEN LOUISA.

BOOK I.

CHAPTER I.

FERDINAND VON SCHILL.

PROFOUND silence reigned in the valleys and gorges of Jena and Auerstadt. The battles were over. The victorious French had marched to Jena to repose for a few days, while the defeated Prussians had fled to Weimar, or were wandering across the fields and in the mountains, anxiously seeking for inaccessible places where they might conceal their presence from the pursuing enemy.

A panic had seized the whole army. All presence of mind and sense of honor seemed to be lost. Every one thought only of saving his life, and of escaping from the conquering arms of the invincible French. Here and there, it is true, officers succeeded by supplications and remonstrances in stopping the fugitives, and in forming them into small detachments, with which the commanders attempted to join the defeated and retreating main force.

But where was this main army? Whither had the Prince of Hohenlohe directed his vanquished troops? Neither the officers nor the soldiers knew. They marched along the high-roads, not knowing whither to direct their steps. But as soon as their restless eyes seemed to discern French soldiers at a distance, the Prussians took to their heels, throwing their muskets away to relieve their flight, and surrendering at discretion when there was no prospect of escape. In one instance a troop of one hundred Prussians surrendered to four French dragoons, who conducted their prisoners to headquarters; and once a large detachment hailed in a loud voice a few mounted grenadiers, who intended perhaps to escape from their superior force, and gave the latter to understand, by signals and laying down their arms, that they only wished to surrender and deliver themselves to the French.

The Prussians had reached Jena and Auerstadt confident of victory, and now had left the battle-field to carry the terrible tidings of their defeat, like a host of ominously croaking ravens, throughout Germany.

The battle-field, on which a few hours previously Death had walked in a triumphant procession, and felled thousands and thousands of bleeding victims to the ground, was now entirely deserted. Night had thrown its pall over the horrors of this Calvary of Prussian glory: the howling storm alone sang a requiem to the unfortunate soldiers, who, with open wounds and features distorted with pain, lay in endless rows on the blood-stained ground.

At length the night of horror is over—the storm dies away—the thick veil of darkness is rent asunder, and the sun of a new day rises pale and sad; pale and sad he illuminates the battle-field, reeking with the blood of so many thousands.

What a spectacle! How many mutilated corpses lie prostrate on the ground with their dilated eyes staring at the sky—and among them, the happy, the enviable! how many living, groaning, bleeding men, writhing with pain, unable to raise their mutilated bodies from the gory bed of torture and death!

The sun discloses the terrible picture hidden by the pall of night; it illuminates the faces of the stark dead, but awakens the living and suffering, the wounded and bleeding, from their benumbed slumber, and recalls them to consciousness and the dreadful knowledge of their wretched existence.

With consciousness return groans and wails; and the dreadful conviction of their wretched ex-

istence opens their lips, and wrings from them shrieks of pain and despair.

How enviable and blissful sleep the dead whose wounds bleed and ache no longer! How wretched and pitiable are the living as they lie on the ground, tortured by the wounds which the howling night wind has dried so that they bleed no more! Those poor deserted ones in the valley and on the hills the sun has awakened, and the air resounds with their moans and cries and despairing groans, and heart-rending entreaties for relief. But no relief comes to them; no cheerful voice replies to their wails. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, had been placed in the ambulances, and, during the sudden panic, the surgeons had left the battle-field with them. But hundreds, nay thousands, remained behind, and with no one to succor them!

From among the crowds of wounded and dead lying on the battle-field of Auerstadt, rose up now an officer, severely injured in the head and arm. The sun, which had aroused him from the apathetic exhaustion into which he had sunk from loss of blood and hunger, now warmed his stiffened limbs, and allayed somewhat the racking pain in his wounded right arm and the bleeding gash in his forehead. He tried to extricate himself from under the carcass of his horse, that pressed heavily on him, and felt delighted as he succeeded in loosing his foot from the stirrup, and drawing it from under the steed. Holding with his uninjured left arm to the saddle, he raised himself slowly. The effort caused the blood to trickle in large drops from the wound in his forehead, which he disregarded under the joyful feeling that he had risen again from his death-bed, and that he was still living and breathing. For a moment he leaned faint and exhausted against the horse as a couch; and feeling a burning thirst, a devouring hunger, his dark, flaming eyes wandered around as if seeking for a refreshing drink for his parched palate, or a piece of bread to appease his hunger.

But his eye everywhere met only stiffened corpses, and the misery and horror of a deserted battle-field. He knew that no food could be found, as the soldiers had not, for two days, either bread or liquor in their knapsacks. Hunger had been the ally that had paved the way for the French emperor—it had debilitated the Prussians and broken their courage.

"I must leave the battle-field," murmured the wounded soldier; "I must save myself while I nave sufficient strength; otherwise I shall die of hunger. Oh, my God, give me strength to escape from so horrible a death! Strengthen my feet for this terrible walk!"

He cast a single fiery glance toward heaven, one in which his whole soul was expressed, and then set out on his walk. He moved along slowly and with tottering steps amid the rows of corpses, some of which were still quivering and moaning, as death drew near, while others writhed and wailed with their wounds. Unable to relieve their racking pains, and to assist them in their boundless misery, it only remained for him to sink down among them, or to avert his eyes, to close his ears to their supplications, and escape with hurried steps from this atmosphere of blood and putrefaction, in order to rescue his own life from the clutches of death.

He hastened, therefore, but his tearful eyes greeted the poor sufferers whom he passed on his way, and his quivering lips muttered a prayer for them.

At length the first and most horrible part of this dreadful field was passed, and he escaped from the chaos of the dead and wounded. That part, across which he was walking now, was less saturated with gore, and the number of corpses scattered over it was much smaller. Here and there was the wreck of a cannon besmeared with blood and mire, and empty knapsacks, fragments of broken wagons and muskets, in the utmost disorder and confusion.

"Spoils for the marauders," whispered the wounded officer, pressing on. "It seems they have not been here yet. God have mercy on me, if they should come now and look on me, too, as their spoil!"

He glanced around anxiously, and in doing so his eye beheld an unsheathed, blood-stained sabre lying near his feet. He made an effort to take it up, regardless of the blood which, in consequence of the effort, trickled again in larger drops from his wounds.

"Well," he said, in a loud and menacing voice, "I shall defend my life at least to the best of my ability; the hateful enemies shall not capture me as long as I am alive. Forward, then; forward with God! He will not desert a faithful soldier!"

And supporting himself on his sabre, as if it were a staff, the officer walked on. Everywhere he met with the same signs of war and destruction; everywhere he beheld corpses, blood-stained cannon-balls, or muskets, which the fugitives had thrown away.

"Oh, for a drop of water!" groaned the officer, while slowly crossing the field; "my lips are parched!"

Tottering and reeling, with the aid of his sabre, and by his firm, energetic will, and the resolution

of his spirit, he succeeded once more in overcoming the weakness of his body.

He hastened on with quicker steps, and hope now lent wings to his feet, for yonder, in the rear of the shrubbery, he beheld a house; men were there, assistance also.

At length, after untold efforts, and a terrible struggle with his pain and exhaustion, he reached the peasant's house. Looking up with longing eyes to the windows, he shouted: "Oh, give me a drink of water! Have mercy on a wounded soldier!"

But no voice responded; no human face appeared behind the small green windows. Every thing remained silent and deserted.

With a deep sigh, and an air of bitter disappointment depicted on his features, he murmured:

"My feet cannot carry me any farther. Perhaps my voice was too weak, and they did not hear me. I will advance closer to the house."

Gathering his strength, with staggering steps he approached and found the door only ajar; whereupon he opened it and entered.

Within the house every thing was as silent as without; not a human being was to be seen; not a voice replied to his shouts. The inside of the dwelling presented a sorry spectacle. All the doors were open; the clay floor was saturated here and there with blood; the small, low rooms were almost empty; only some half-destroyed furniture, a few broken jars and other utensils, were lying about. The inmates either had fled from the enemy, or he had expelled them from their house.

"There is no help for me," sighed the officer, casting a despairing glance on this scene of desolation. "Oh, why was it not vouchsafed to me to die on the battle-field? Why did not a compassionate cannon-ball have mercy on me, and give me death on the field of honor? Then, at least, I should have died as a brave soldier, and my name would have been honorably mentioned; now I am doomed to be named only among the missing! Oh, it is sad and bitter to die alone, unlamented by my friends, and with no tear of compassion from the eyes of my queen! Oh, Louisa, Louisa, you will weep much for your crown, for your country, and for your people, but you will not have a tear for the poor lieutenant of your dragoons, who is dying here alone uttering a prayer for a blessing on you! Farewell queen, may God grant you strength, and—"

His words died away; a deadly pallor overspread his features, his head turned dizzy, and a ringing noise filled his ears.

"Death! death!" he murmured faintly, and, with a sigh, he fell senseless to the ground.

Every thing had become silent again in the humble house; not a human sound interrupted the stillness reigning in the desolate room. Only the hum of a few flies, rushing with their heads against the window-panes, was heard. Once a rustling noise was heard in a corner, and a mouse glided across the floor, its piercing, glittering eyes looked searchingly around, and the sight of the bloody, motionless form, lying prostrate on the floor, seemed to affright it, for it turned and slipped away even faster than it had approached, and disappeared in the corner.

The sun rose higher, and shone down on the dimmed windows of the house, reflecting their yellow outlines on the floor, and illuminated the gold lace adorning the uniform of the prostrate and motionless officer.

All at once the silence was broken by the approach of hurried steps, and a loud voice was heard near at hand, shouting:

"Is there anybody in the house?"

Then every thing was still again. The newcomer was evidently waiting for a reply. After a pause, the steps drew nearer—now they were already in the hall; and now the tall, slender form of a Prussian officer, with a bandaged head and arm, appeared on the threshold of the room. When he beheld the immovable body on the floor, his pale face expressed surprise and compassion.

"An officer of the queen's dragoons!" he ejaculated, and in the next moment he was by his side. He knelt down, and placed his hand inquiringly on the heart and forehead of the prostrate officer.

"He is warm still," he murmured, "and it seems to me his heart is yet beating. Perhaps, perhaps he only fainted from loss of blood, just as I did before my wounds had been dressed. Let us see."

He hastily drew a flask from his bosom, and pouring some of its contents into his hand, he washed with it the forehead and temples of his poor comrade.

A slight shudder now pervaded his whole frame, and he looked with a half-unconscious, dreamy glance into the face of the stranger, who had bent over him with an air of heart-felt sympathy.

"Where am I?" he asked, in a low, tremulous voice.

"With a comrade," said the other, kindly. "With a companion in misfortune who is wounded, and a fugitive like you. I am an officer of the Hohenlohe regiment, and fought at Jena. Since last night I have been wandering about, constantly

exposed to the danger of falling into the hands of the enemy. My name is Pückler—it is a good Prussian name. You see, therefore, it is a friend who is assisting his poor comrade, and you need not fear any thing. Now, tell me what can I do for you?"

"Water, water!" groaned the wounded officer, "water!"

"You had better take some of my wine here," said the other; "it will quench your thirst, and invigorate you at the same time."

He held the flask to the lips of his comrade, and made him sip a little of the wine.

"Now it is enough," he said, withdrawing the flask from his lips. "Since you have quenched your thirst, comrade, would you not like to eat a piece of bread and some meat? Ah, you smile; you are surprised because I guess your wishes and know your sufferings. You need not wonder at it, however, comrade, for I have undergone just the same torture as you. Above all, you must eat something."

While speaking, he had produced from his knapsack a loaf of bread and a piece of roast chicken, and cutting a few slices from both, placed them tenderly in the mouth of the sufferer, looking on with smiling joy while the other moved his jaws, slowly at first, but soon more rapidly and eagerly.

"Now another draught of wine, comrade," he said, "and then I may dare to give you some more food. Hush! do not say a word—it is a sacred work you are doing now, a work by which you are just about to save a human life. You must not, therefore, interrupt it by any superfluous protestations of gratitude. Moreover, your words are written in your eyes, and you cannot tell me any thing better and more beautiful than what I am reading therein. Drink! So! And here is a piece of bread and a wing of the chicken. While you are eating, I will look around in the yard and garden to find there some water to wash your wounds."

Without waiting for a reply, he hastily left the officer alone with the piece of bread, the wing of the chicken, and the flask. When he returned, about fifteen minutes later, with a jar filled with water, the bread and meat had disappeared; but instead of the pale, immovable, and cadaverous being, he found seated on the floor a young man with flashing eyes, a faint blush on his cheeks, and a gentle smile on his lips.

"You have saved me," he said, extending his hand toward his returning comrade. "I should have died of hunger and exhaustion, if you had not relieved me so mercifully."

"Comrade," said the officer, smiling, "you have just repeated the same words which I addressed two hours ago to another comrade whom I met on the retreat; or, to speak more correctly, who found me lying in the ditch. The lucky fellow had got a horse; he offered me a seat behind him. But I saw that the animal was too weak to carry both of us; hence I did not accept his offer, but I took the refreshments which he gave to me, and with which he not only saved my life, but yours too. You are, therefore, under no obligations to me, but to him alone."

"You are as kind as you are generous," said the other, gently, involuntarily raising his hand toward his forehead.

"And I see that you are in pain," exclaimed the officer, "and that the wound in your head is burning. Mine has been dressed already, and my shattered arm bandaged—for I received both wounds yesterday in the early part of the battle, and the surgeon attended to them while the bullets were hissing around us."

"I was wounded only when every thing was lost," sighed the other. "A member of the accursed imperial guard struck me down."

"I hope you gave him a receipt in full for your wounds?" asked the officer, while tenderly washing the wound with the water he had brought along in the broken jar.

The other officer looked up to him with flashing eyes.

"I gave him a receipt which he has already shown to God Himself," he said, "provided there is a God for these accursed French. My sword cleft his skull, but I fell together with him."

"Your wound here in the forehead is of no consequence," said the officer; "the stroke only cut the skin. Let us put this moistened handkerchief on it."

"Oh, now I am better," said the other; "now that the wound burns less painfully, I feel that life is circulating again through all my veins."

"And what about your arm?"

"A lancer pierced it. I hope he was kind enough not to touch the bone, so that the arm need not be amputated. It is true, it pains severely; but, you see, I can move it a little, which proves that it is not shattered. Now, comrade, do me still another favor—assist me in rising."

"Here, lean firmly on me. There! I will lift you up—now you are on your legs again. Lean on me still, for you might become dizzy."

"No, I shall not. I feel again well and strong enough to take the burden of life on my shoulders. Thank God! I am able to stand again. For, how-

ever crushed and trampled under foot we may be, we will submit to our fate manfully, and stand erect. The conqueror and tyrant shall not succeed in bending our heads, although he has broken our hearts. Ah, comrade, that was a terrible day when all Prussia sank in ruins!"

"You were in the thickest of the fray? The regiment of the queen's dragoons fought at Auerstadt, I believe?"

"Yes, it fought at Auerstadt, or rather it did the same as all the other regiments—it deserted. Only a few squadrons complied with the urgent exhortations of the king, who led us against the squares of the enemy near Hassenhausen. His own horse was shot; we officers stood our ground, but the dragoons ran away.* Ah, I wept with rage, and if my tears could have been transformed into bullets, they would not have been directed against the enemy, but against our own cowardly dragoons. The battle would have been won if our soldiers had not disgracefully taken to their heels. All shouts, orders, supplications, were in vain; the soldiers were running, although no enemy pursued them; the panic had rendered them perfectly crazy."

"And do you really believe, comrade, that we owe the loss of the battle exclusively to the cowardice of the soldiers?" asked the officer. "Did our generals do their duty? Ah, you look gloomy, and do not reply. Then you agree with me? Let us, however, speak of all these things afterward, but first of ourselves."

"Yes, first of ourselves!" exclaimed the other, starting from his gloomy reflections. "Count Pückler, you were kind enough to tell me your name, when you relieved an unknown sufferer in so humane a manner, and thereby saved his life. Now permit me to tell you my name, too, so that you may know at least who will always revere your memory with affection and gratitude. I am Second-Lieutenant Ferdinand von Schill. You see, it is a very humble name; still I had solemnly vowed that it should not be unknown in the battles that were to be fought."

"And I see it written on your brow, comrade, that you will at some future time make up for what fate has now prevented you from accomplishing," said Count Pückler, kindly offering his hand to Lieutenant von Schill. "Yet now let us not think of the future, but of the present. We are disabled, and will be helpless as soon as the wound-fever sets in; and we may be sure that that will be to-night. We must, therefore, find a place of refuge; for, if we remain here, without assistance, and without food, we shall surely be lost."

* Historical.

"You are right; we must leave this house," said Schill; "we must try to reach a city or village. Come, let us go. You are armed, and I have got a sabre, too. Let us go, but previously let us swear that we will not surrender to the French, but rather die, even should it be necessary to commit suicide! You have a knife, and when you cut some bread for me, I saw that it was very sharp. Will you give it to me?"

"What for?"

"I want to stab myself as soon as I see that I cannot escape from the enemy!"

"And I? What is to become of me?"

"Before killing myself, I shall stab you with my sabre. Will that content you?"

"It will. Be careful, however, to hit my heart; do not merely wound, but kill me."

"Ah, I see that we understand each other, and that the same heart is pulsating in our breast!" exclaimed Schill, joyfully. "Let us die, rather than be captured by the enemy, and depend on the mercy of the Corsican tyrant! Now, comrade, let us go! For you are right; the wound-fever will set in toward evening, and without assistance we shall be lost."

"Come," said Pückler, "place your uninjured arm in mine. It seems fate has destined us for each other, for it has ruined your right arm and my left arm; thus we can walk at least side by side, mutually supporting ourselves. I shall be your right hand, and you will lend me your left arm when I have to embrace anybody. But, it is true, no one will now care for our embrace; every one will mock and deride us, and try to read in the bloody handwriting on our foreheads: 'He is also one of the vanquished Prussians!'"

"Comrade, did you not tell me, a little while ago, that it would be better for us to attend to our own affairs, before talking about other matters?"

"It is true; let us go!"

And, leaning on each other, the two officers left the house.

CHAPTER II.

THE GERMAN SONG.

It was a sunny morning in autumn; the two wounded officers were inhaling the bracing air in long draughts, and their eyes were wandering over the transparent sky and the picturesque landscape.

"And to think that my eyes would never more have seen all this, if you had not had mercy on

me!" said Schill, with a grateful glance at his companion.

"Ah, my friend," sighed Pückler, mournfully," "we shall not always behold the sky and this beautiful, silent scene, but it may easily happen that we shall see much misery to-day, and that you will curse your eyes for being compelled to perceive it! Still you are right—it is better to live, even in anguish and distress, than to die in anguish and distress; for he who lives has still a future before him, and is able to strive in it for revenge and compensation for the past. Let us descry our immediate future from the hill yonder, and there decide on the direction we shall take."

They walked toward the neighboring hill. Frequently they had to stop on the way; frequently they sank down exhausted; but their will and youthful energy overcame their weakness, and finally they reached their destination: they stood on the summit, and were able to survey the whole country for many miles around.

"Yonder, where that dreadful smoke is rising, is the battle-field of Auerstadt!" said Schill, after a long pause, during which they had taken breath.

"Yes, and beyond those hills is Jena," said Pückler, sadly. "Those are two melancholy names for a Prussian ear, and, like Ulysses, I should like to close mine so as not to hear that siren voice of death any more; for, I tell you, whenever I hear those two names, I am driven to despair, and would like to throw myself into that abyss!"

"My friend, it seems to me we are already in the abyss, and our first and most earnest endeavors should be directed toward saving us from it," said Schill, shrugging his shoulders. "Our first step should be to get safely through the enemy's lines, in order to escape from the dangers to which a collision with the French would expose us. Whither shall we turn now? Have you formed already a definite plan, count?"

"Being disabled from active service by my wounds, I shall repair to my estates in Silesia, and remain there till I have recovered. And you, comrade—will you permit me to make you an offer? If you have not yet come to a different decision, you ought to accompany me, and stay at my house till your wounds are healed. I have splendid woods, and facilities for angling on my estates; and if you like hunting and fishing, I am sure a sojourn at my house will afford you plenty of amusement."

"But you forget that my right arm is wounded, count," said Schill, with a melancholy smile; "hence, I shall be but a poor companion for you, and ought not to accept your kind offer. I confess, moreover, that my mind is too restless, and my heart too deeply grieved, to enjoy the peace and quiet of country life. I must remain in the noise and turmoil of the world, and see what will become of poor Prussia. I intend going to Kolberg; the fortress is strong and impregnable; it will be an insurmountable bulwark against the enemy, and I have several intimate friends at the fortress. I will stay with them till I am well again."

"Our paths, then, will soon be different. You will go to the north; I, to the east. But, for a few days, we shall still remain together, for the wound-fever will compel us to advance very slowly. Let us look out now for a dinner, and for a place where we may safely sleep to-night."

"And, it seems to me, I see a prospect of obtaining both. Yonder," said Schill, pointing with his left hand to a small point on the horizon. "Do you perceive that steeple? There is a village, and consequently there are men; and, as it is situated northeast, it is in the right direction for both of us."

"You are right; we will direct our steps thither," exclaimed Count Pückler. "May Fate be propitious to us, and keep the French out of our path!"

They walked down the hill on the opposite side, and then commenced crossing, arm in arm, the stubble-field that lay stretched out before them. All around them nothing whatever was stirring—not a sound, not even the chirping of a bird, or the humming of a beetle, interrupted the profound silence; neither a house, nor any trace of human life, was to be seen anywhere.

"It is as still here as the grave," whispered Count Pückler.

"Death probably has already stalked across this field on its way to Jena and Auerstadt," said Schill, "and for this reason all Nature seems to hold its breath lest it should return."

"But it will not return very soon, for I should think Death itself must be exhausted by the terrible work it had to perform on the battle-field. Comrade, now that we know our destination, and have arranged our affairs, we may converse a little about the dreadful events which occurred yesterday. You were at Auerstadt. Do you know that at Jena we had no knowledge whatever of the battle that was going on at Auerstadt, and were informed of it only in the evening, after we had been completely routed? We did not hear the reports of your guns!"

"So it was with us, too. At Auerstadt we did not know that a battle was being fought at Jena;

the roar of our own artillery prevented us from hearing yours. Only when the king had sent off several orderlies to order the Prince of Hohenlohe and General Rüchel to cover our retreat, we learned, from the chasseur who returned first, that a battle had been fought also at Jena, and that Hohenlohe and Rüchel were unable to afford us any assistance. I cannot describe to you the dismay produced by this intelligence. Every one thought only of saving himself; there was no longer any obedience, sense of honor, or bravery. The generals were too confused to issue orders, and the soldiers too frightened to listen to their officers."

"And the king?"

"The king was evidently determined to die. His face was livid, his lips were quivering; wherever the bullets rained down most murderously, thither he spurred his horse. He had two horses killed, but remained uninjured. It seems Fate was too unmerciful toward him: it had decreed that the King of Prussia should not die, but learn in the stern school of suffering and experience what Prussia needs."

"And the Duke of Brunswick—the commander-in-chief?"

"Ah, you do not yet know the terrible fate that befell him? A bullet passed through his head; it entered on the right side, and came out on the left. This happened in the early part of the battle; the duke was brought back to Auerstadt in a fainting condition; his wound was dressed there, and then he was carried by some soldiers to Blankenburg."

"The duke is not yet dead, then, notwithstanding this terrible wound?"

"No," said Schill, solemnly, "God would not let him die without reaping the fruit of what he had sown. For his mental blindness God punished him with physical blindness. The ball destroyed both his eyes."

"Dreadful!" muttered Count Pückler.

"You pity him?" asked Schill, harshly. "You had better pity the thousands who are lying on the bloody battle-fields of Jena and Auerstadt, and accusing the duke of having murdered them! You had better pity Prussia's misfortunes and disgrace, which have been brought about by the duke! For, I tell you, the indecision, vacillation, and timidity of the duke were the sole causes of our terrible disaster. All of us felt and knew it. None of the younger officers and generals had any doubt of it; every one knew that those old gentlemen, who had outlived their own glory, and still believed that they lived in the days of Frederick the Great, were unequal to the occasion, to the present time, and to the present war. Because we were aware of this, we made the utmost efforts to bring about a change of commanders. We elected a deputation of officers, and sent them to General Kalkreuth, for the purpose of laying our complaints and prayers before him, and of imploring him to induce the king to deprive the duke of his command, and to intrust it to younger and more resolute hands. The deputation consisted of none but skilful, prominent, and highly-esteemed officers, who boldly declared it to be their firm conviction that the king was in danger of losing his crown and his states, if the Duke of Brunswick should remain at the head of the army."*

"And what did General Kalkreuth reply to them?"

"The general asked, in a harsh tone, for a further explanation of their words, and the officers gave it to him. They censured the duke's idea of establishing a camp at Weimar, and dwelt contemptuously on the reasons that might have induced him to do so. They proved, by referring to the whole proceedings of the duke, that he knew neither what he was doing nor what he wanted to do; neither where he was, nor whither he was going; and they added that, in consequence of this deplorable state of affairs, the whole army was filled with the most startling and discouraging rumors.† But their prayers, their remonstrances, their angry denunciations, and predictions, were unavailing. General Kalkreuth could not make up his mind to represent the dangers of the situation to the king, although he himself was just as well satisfied of its critical character as all the younger officers of the army. And thus we were defeated, disastrously defeated and routed, in spite of all warnings of our consciousness of the danger, and of all predictions. This time it was not the inexperience and impetuosity of youth, but the antiquated method and slowness of age, that brought about our ruin."

"Yes, you are right," sighed Count Pückler; "our old generals are the cause of our misfortunes."

"Do you know, for instance," asked Schill, indignantly, "why we lost the important defile of Kösen? In consequence of the night-sweat of General von Schmettau!"

"Ah, you can jest even now!" said Pückler, sadly.

"I do not jest, by any means; on the contrary, I am in dead earnest! The Duke of Brunswick

* Vide Frederick von Gentz's writings, edited by G. Schlesier, vol. ii., p. 314.

† Ibid., vol. ii., p. 315.

had ordered the general, on the day before the battle, to start early next morning with his division, and occupy the defile of Kösen. His adjutant, Lieutenant von Pfuel, went repeatedly to his headquarters to remind him of the urgent necessity of setting out, and to implore him to rise from his bed. 'But, sir,' replied the old general, 'let me wait at least until my night-sweat is gone; I understand it is a very chilly morning!'* The old general did not rise until nine o'clock, and started at ten with his division toward Kösen. When he reached the defile he found that Marshal Davoust had caused it to be occupied by a regiment of infantry scarcely an hour before. That night-sweat of the old general has become the death-sweat of many brave Prussians, and the gray hairs of the old chieftain will now cause the hair of our youth to turn gray with shame and grief."

"Oh, it is a terrible disgrace for us, and I hardly know how we are to bear it in a manly and dignified manner," said Count Pückler, gloomily. "In these hours of melancholy only we feel the full extent of our ardent love for our country; now only we perceive the indissoluble ties that attach our hearts to it! I should like to pour out my blood in tears for this crushed, disgraced, and yet so dearly-beloved country, and I feel that if we do not rise speedily from our degradation, I shall die of despair!"

"You will not die," said Schill, gravely, "for all of us who love Prussia, and are devoted to her honor, must not think of dying at the present time; all of us must assist Prussia in rising again from the dust, so that she may once more boldly meet the tyrant, and take revenge for herself and for Germany! For Prussia is Germany now, because she is the only power in Germany that has resisted and braved the Corsican conqueror. But God wanted first to arouse her from her arrogance and vanity, and make the weakness of her leading men known to her, that she might rise after a noble regeneration and with redoubled strength. Life springs from death, and Prussia had to fall so low as to break her old decrepit limbs that were still kept together by her glory from the Seven Years' War; and then the young, vigorous soldier of the new century will arise and draw the sword to deliver his subjugated country, and avenge its desecrated honor!"

"Then you hope still for a change for the better?" asked Count Pückler, mournfully.

"I base my hopes on the propitious star of Prussia," exclaimed Schill, enthusiastically, "on the future, on the wrath and grief which will awake now in all Prussian hearts, arousing the sluggards, strengthening the vacillating, and urging the timid. I base my hopes on the tears of Queen Louisa, which will move Heaven to help us and awaken avengers on earth. And, for ourselves, comrade, with our wounds, with our disgrace, we must be like the spirits of vengeance that sweep across the heath in the howling storm of adversity, and awaken the sleeper who would give way to dreams of peace and inaction. Prussia must not make peace in her present calamitous condition; she must fill the hearts and minds of all with longings for war, till the whole nation arises in its rage and expels the enemy from the country! My friend, we have now witnessed the downfall of Prussia, but henceforth we must exert ourselves in order to witness also her regeneration. We ourselves must be the—"

"Hush!" said Pückler, hastily. "Just look there, and then take your sabre."

They were now near a field-path leading to a small wood which a slender youth had just left, and was hastily approaching them. As yet, however, he was so far from them that they were unable to distinguish his features or his dress, and to discern whether he was an armed soldier or a peaceable wanderer.

"It is, doubtless, a French soldier, and his comrades are lying in ambush," murmured Pückler, placing his hand on his sword.

"If he wants to attack us, he had better say his death-prayers," said Schill, calmly. "There are two of us, and each has one uninjured arm."

The youth had meanwhile drawn nearer, and they saw that he did not wear any uniform.

"He is very young," said Pückler, "and a civilian. He has apparently not yet seen us. That bush yonder is concealing us from his eyes. Let us stoop a little, and, as the path lies beyond, he may pass by without noticing us."

They knelt down behind the bush, but, while doing so, took their swords, and prepared for an attack. Then they held their breath and listened.

Profound silence reigned around, and nothing was to be heard but the quick steps of the wanderer, who drew nearer and nearer. Suddenly this silence was interrupted by a fresh and youthful voice, singing the air of a popular song.

"Ah, he sings," murmured Schill. "He who can sing to-day, must be very harmless, and it is not worth while to kill him."

"Hush! hush! let us listen to his song. He is now singing words to the melody. Just listen!"

The voice resounded nearer and nearer to the

* Vide Förster's "Modern History of Prussia," vol. i., p. 757.

two listeners, and they could understand the words he was singing:

O Hermann! for thy country's fall
No tears! Where vanquished valor bled
The victor rules, and Slavery's pall
Upon these hills and vales is spread.
Shame burns within me, for the brave
Lie mouldering in the freeman's grave.

No voice! where sturdy Luther spoke
Fearless for men who dared be free!
O would that Heaven's thunder woke
My people for their liberty!
Must heroes fight and die in vain?—
Ye cowards! grasp your swords again!

Revenge! revenge! a gory shroud
To tyrants, and the slaves that yield!
Eternal honor calls aloud
For courage in the battle-field.
Who loves or fears a conquered land
That bows beneath the despot's hand?

And whither flee? Where Winkelried
And Tell and Ruyter bravely broke
Oppression's power—their country freed—
All—all beneath the usurper's yoke!
From Alpine fountains to the sea
The patriot dead alone are free.

My people! in this sorrowing night,
The clanking of your chains may be
The sign of vengeance, and the fight
Of former times the world may see,
When Hermann in that storied day
As a wild torrent cleft his way.

No idle song, O youth! thy boast.
In self-born virtue be as one
Who is himself a mighty host
By whose sole arm is victory won.
No blazoned monument so grand
As death for the dear Fatherland.

To die! how welcome to the brave!
The tomb awakes no coward fear
Save to the wretched, trembling slave
Who for his country sheds no tear.
To crown me with a fadeless wreath
Be thine, O happy, sacred death!

Come, shining sword! avenge my dead!
Alone canst thou remove this shame.
Proud ornament! with slaughter red
Restore my native land its fame.
By night, by day, in sun or shade,
Be girt around me, trusty blade.

The trumpet on the morning gale!
Arm! forward to the bloody strife!
From loftiest mountain to the vale
Asks dying Freedom for her life.
Our standard raise, to glory given,
And higher still our hearts to Heaven.*

* This is one of Arndt's soul-stirring, patriotic hymns, published in 1806. It is difficult to render into readable English this species of German heroic verse so as to preserve its rhythm. All the thought of the original is however expressed in the translation. The only change of any importance is the transposition of the seventh stanza.

Keine Thräne, Hermann, für dein Volk?
Keine Thräne, und die Schande brennet,
Und der Feind gebietet, wo die Freien
Siegten und fielen?

Keine Stimme laut, wo Luther sprach?
Alle Donner, die der Himmel sendet,
Sollten rufen: Volk erwache! feiges;
Greife zum Schwerte.

Rache! Rache! heissen, blut'gen Tod
Sklavenfürsten und dem Knecht der fliehet!
Männerwort gefürchtet und gepriesen,
Männliche Tugend!

Ach wohin? wo Winkelried erlag,
Wilhelm schlug, und Ruyter tapfer siegte;
Auf den höchsten Alpen, in den tiefsten
Sümpfen ist Knechtschaft.

Auch du, Hermann's, auch du, kühnes Volk?
Auf! Erwache! Schüttle deine Ketten,
Dass die Schmach die Welt vernehme, bald auch
Blutige Rache!

Lieder helfen hier and Mäler nicht.
Mäler? Tief im Herzen sei das Denkmal,
An dem Thurm der selbstgebornen Tugend
Hebe dich, Jüngling!

Und voran geworfen kühn die Brust,
Und empor das Auge zu dem Himmel,
Hoch die Fahne! Hoch zum Himmel! Höher
Flammende Herzen.

Tod, du süsser, für das Vaterland,
Süsser als der Brautgruss, als das Lallen
Auf dem Mutterschooss des ersten Kindes,
Sei mir willkommen!

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert,
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften!
Vor der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,
Zierde der Tapfern!

Just when the youth had sung the last verse in a ringing voice, he had reached the bush. And now there arose above it two pale heads, wrapped in white, blood-stained handkerchiefs, and sang in enthusiastic tone the last verse of the song they had heard:

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert!
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften!
Vor der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,
Zierde der Tapfern!

CHAPTER III.

THE OATH OF VENGEANCE.

SPEECHLESS with surprise, the youth had listened to the song, and fixed his large eyes steadfastly on the two officers, whose uniforms and wounds revealed to him the melancholy fate that had befallen them during the last few days.

When the two were silent, he approached them with an air of profound respect.

"Bravo, officers of Auerstadt or Jena," he said, with a voice trembling with emotion, "permit a poor young wanderer to present his respects to you, and to thank you, in the name of the German fatherland, for the wounds on your foreheads. Such wounds are also an 'ornament of the brave.'" *

"And such words are an ornament of a noble heart," exclaimed Schill, offering his hand to the youth.

He took it with a joyful gesture, and, quickly kneeling down, imprinted a glowing kiss on the feverish hand of the wounded officer.

"My God!" exclaimed Schill, surprised, "what are you doing? How can a man kiss another's hand and kneel before him? Rise!"

"I am no man," said the youth, deeply moved. "I am but a poor boy, who has not yet done any thing for his country, and, perhaps, never will be able to do any thing for it, but who feels the most profound respect for those who were more fortunate than he. I, therefore, kiss your hand as Catholics kiss the hands of their saints and martyrs. For are you not at the present hour a martyr of German liberty? Hence, sir, give me your hand, too. Let me press my poor lips on it, also. It is the only way for me to manifest my profound respect for you."

"No," said Count Pückler, feelingly, "you shall not kiss my hand, but my cheeks and my lips. Let me embrace you, young man, let me embrace you for the boon you have conferred on us by your words. Come, sir!"

The young man uttered a joyous cry, and, rising quickly, threw himself with youthful impetuosity into the count's arms.

"I will and must have my share in the embrace," exclaimed Schill, smiling; "did not you before expressly request me, comrade, to lend you my left arm for every embrace? Well, then, here it is."

He quickly wound his left arm around the necks of the others, and pressed them firmly to his heart. When they withdrew their arms again, tears were glistening in the eyes of the officers as well as in those of the youth.

"Grief and adversity cause men easily to fraternize," said Schill, "and therefore we shall be brethren henceforward."

"You will be my brethren?" exclaimed the young man, joyfully. "You will permit the poor boy to call two heroes brethren?"

"Heroes!" said Pückler, sighing. "Then you do not know, my friends, that we were disgracefully defeated and trampled under foot in yesterday's battle?"

"I know that, but I know also that the *luck* of battles is not the true standard for the bravery of warriors. *You* at least did not run, and, like true heroes, you bear your wounds on your foreheads; your mothers, therefore, will proudly bid you welcome; your betrothed or your wives will embrace you with rapturous tears, and your friends will be proud of your valor."

"Does it not seem almost as though he had heard our mournful and despondent words, and wished to comfort us?" asked Schill, turning to the count. "His blue eyes apparently do not behold only our physical wounds, but also those which cause our hearts to bleed, and he wishes to apply a balm to them by his sweet, flattering words."

"He wishes to console the poor defeated, and reconcile them to their fate," said Pückler, nodding kindly to the youth.

"You have a better and more generous opinion of me than I deserve," he said, sadly bowing his head so as to shake its exuberant mass of long, fair hair. "I simply told you what I thought, and what every one who looks at both of you will and must think."

"Would to God you spoke the truth, young man!" said Count Pückler, mournfully. "Believe me, however, but few will think like yourself; a great many will rejoice at seeing us defeated and humiliated."

"Instead of bewailing us, they will deride us," exclaimed Schill; "instead of weeping with us, they will revile us!"

"Who will dare to do so?" exclaimed the youth, in an outburst of generous anger. "Do you forget, then, that you are in Germany, and that you have shed your blood for your country? Your German brethren will not deride you; they will not rejoice at your sufferings; they will hope with you for a better and more fortunate day when you will get even with that insolent and hateful enemy, for the battles of Jena and Auerstadt."

"Pray to God, my young friend, that that day may speedily dawn!" said Count Pückler, heaving a sigh.

"Pray!" ejaculated the young man, impetuously. "In times like ours it is not sufficient to pray and to hope for divine assistance; we ought rather to act and toil, and, instead of folding our hands, arm them either with the sword or with the dagger."

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* An allusion to the last line of the original song.

"With the dagger?" asked Schill. "The dagger is the weapon of assassins."

"Was Mœros an assassin because he wanted to stab Dionysius the tyrant?" asked the youth. "Was he not rather a generous and high-minded man, whom our great Schiller deemed worthy of becoming the hero of one of his finest poems? When the fatherland is in danger, every weapon is sacred, and every way lawful which a bold heart desires to pursue, to deliver the country."

"Well, I see already that your heart will choose the right, and not shrink back from dangers," said Pückler, kindly. "But, in the first place, tell us which way you are now going to take, that we may know whether we shall be allowed to accompany you or not."

"I come from Erfurt, where my parents are living," said the young man; "last night I was at Weimar, and now I am going to do what I have sworn a solemn oath to my father to do. I am on my way to Leipsic."

"And may I inquire what you are going to do in Leipsic?"

The young man was silent, and a flaming blush mantled for a moment his delicate, innocent face. "According to my father's wishes, I shall become there a merchant's apprentice," he said, in a low and embarrassed voice.

"What! Feeling so generous an enthusiasm for the fatherland and its soldiers, you want to become a merchant?" asked Schill, in surprise.

The youth raised his blue eyes to him; they were filled with tears.

"I am ordered to become a merchant," he said in a low voice. "My father is a pious preacher, and hates and detests warfare; he says it is sinful for men to raise their weapons against their brethren, as though they were wild beasts, against which you cannot defend yourself but by killing them. My mother, in former days, became familiar with the horrors of war; she fears, therefore, lest her only son should fall a prey to them, and wishes to protect him from such a fate. With bitter tears, with folded hands, nay, almost on her knees, she implored me to desist from my purpose of becoming a soldier, and not to break her heart with grief and anguish. My mother begged and wept, my father scolded and threatened, and thus I was obliged to yield and be a dutiful son. Three days ago my father administered the sacrament to me, and I swore an oath to him at the altar to remain faithful to the avocation he had selected for me, and never to become a soldier!"

He paused, and the tears which had filled his eyes rolled like pearls over his cheeks.

"Poor friend!" murmured Pückler.

"Poor brother!" said Schill, indignantly. "To be doomed to wield the yardstick in place of the sword! How can a father be so cruel as to make his son take such a pledge at the present time?"

"My father is not cruel," said the youth, gently; "his only aim is my happiness, but he wishes to bring it about in his own way, and not in mine. It behooves a son to yield and obey. Accordingly, I shall not become a soldier, but God knows whether it will be conducive to my happiness. Many a one has already been driven to commit a crime by his despair at having chosen an unsuitable avocation. But let us speak no more of myself," he added, shaking his head indignantly, as if he wanted to drive the tears from his eyes; "let us speak no more of my petty, miserable grief, but of your great sorrow, which all Germany shares with you. You know now every thing concerning my affairs, and it only remains for me to mention my name. It is Staps; 'Frederick Staps' will be my firm one day, if I should live to see it."

"Your name is Frederick, like that of Prussia's great king," said Schill, comfortingly, "and who knows whether you will not one day become a great soldier like him?"

"But I have told you already that I have sworn at the altar never to become a soldier," said Frederick Staps, sighing. "I shall never break the oath I have sworn to my father, nor the one either which I have sworn to myself!"

"The oath that you will become a good and honest man, I suppose?" asked Pückler.

"It is unecessary to take such an oath, because that is a matter of course," said Frederick Staps, quickly. "I swore another oath, but nobody but God must know it. When the time has come, you shall be informed of it. Do not forget my name, and when you hear from me one day, remember this hour and the tears you saw me shed for being compelled to choose an avocation that is repugnant to me."

"And in order to remember us, you must know who we are," exclaimed Count Pückler, stating his name.

"And my name is Schill," said the lieutenant. "We fought at Auerstadt and Jena, and are now wandering about, and seeking for a place where we may spend the coming night."

"You will find it in the village in the rear of the wood," said Frederick Staps. "Come, I will guide you back to the village and to the country parson, to whom I have on my way just presented my father's respects. He is a good and generous man. You will be kindly received and nursed by

him and his wife; and if French soldiers should come to his house, he would not betray, but conceal you."

"Oh, what delightful words you have just uttered!" exclaimed Schill, joyously. "Blessed be your lips which have announced to us that we shall be saved, for, let me tell you, we should prefer death to French captivity!"

"I understand that," said Frederick Staps, quietly. "Come, I will guide you thither."

"And we accept your offer, as friends ought to accept that of a friend," said Count Pückler. "We do not say: 'We cause you trouble and loss of time; let us therefore try to find our way alone;' but we say: 'In these days of affliction we are all brethren, and we must rely on each other's assistance.' Come, therefore, brother, and be our guide."

They walked slowly toward the small wood from which Staps had issued.

"You stated you had been in Weimar, and spent a night there," asked Count Pückler. How does the place look—what do people say, and who is there?"

"It looks like a pandemonium," replied Staps. "Nothing is to be heard but curses, shouts, threats, and screams; nothing to be seen but faces pale with terror, and fleeing from the pursuing soldiers. The streets are crowded with men, wagons, and horses. The inhabitants want to leave the city; they know not whither to escape, and are forced back at the gates by French soldiers making their entry, or by vehicles filled with wounded."

"And how is it at the palace? The duchess has fled from the wrath of the conqueror, I suppose?"

"No, the duchess has remained to beg Napoleon to have mercy on her state and her husband."

"But is Napoleon already in Weimar?"

"Yes; he came over from Jena this morning. The duchess received him at the foot of the palace staircase, and did not avert her eyes from his angry and haughty glances, but looked at him with the proud calmness of a noble German lady. 'You have not fled, then?' asked Napoleon, harshly. 'Then you do not fear my anger at the senseless and hostile conduct of your husband?' The duchess looked quietly at him. 'You see, sire, I have remained because I have confided in your generosity, and wished to intercede for my husband and my people.' Napoleon looked at her during a long pause, and her quiet dignity seemed to impress him very favorably. 'That was well done,' he said at last, 'and for your sake, and because you have reposed confidence in me, I will forgive your husband.' * I do not know what occurred afterward, for I left the palace when Napoleon had retired to the rooms reserved for his personal use. My cousin, who is lady's maid of the duchess, told me what I have just related to you."

"And you did not hear any thing about our king and his consort?"

"Both are said to be on the way to Magdeburg, where they will remain, if the pursuing enemy will permit them. Napoleon's hatred and wrath are not yet satiated, and his latest bulletin is written in the same vulgar guard-room style as all the recent manifestoes in which he dares to revile the noble and beautiful queen."

"Then another bulletin has appeared?"

"It was just distributed among the troops when I left Weimar. A soldier, whom I asked for his copy, gave it to me. Do you wish to read it?"

"Read it to us," said Count Pückler. "Let us rest a little in the shade of these trees, for I confess I feel greatly exhausted, and my feet refuse to carry me any farther. And how do you feel, comrade?"

"Do you believe," asked Schill, in a faint voice, "do you believe that I should not have given vent to my anger at the impudence of that Corsican who dares to revile our noble queen, if I had had sufficient strength to speak? Let us sit down and rest. See, there is a splendid old oak. Let us take breath under its shade."

They walked toward a large oak, which stood at the entrance of the wood, and the foot of which was overgrown with fragrant green moss. Assisted by Staps, the two officers seated themselves, and the roots, covered with soft turf, served as pillows to their wounded heads.

"Oh, how delightful to rest on German soil under a German oak!" sighed Schill. "I should like to lie here all my lifetime, looking up to the rustling leaves, and dreaming! Amid the stillness surrounding us, it is almost impossible to believe that we witnessed yesterday such wild strife and bloodshed. Is all this reality, or have we had merely an evil, feverish dream?"

"Touch your forehead; try to raise your right arm, and you will see that it is reality," said Pückler, laughing bitterly, "and if you should have any doubt, let our young friend read the latest bulletin issued by our *triumphator*. But will you promise not to interrupt him, nor to be angry at what we are going to hear?"

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* Napoleon's own words.—Vide "Mémoires de Constant," vol. iv., and "History of Napoleon," by * * * r, vol. ii., p. 105.

"I promise you to be perfectly calm, for my weakness compels me to be so. Read, friend Staps. But, pray, let us have the German translation, for it would be a violation of the peaceful silence of the forest, and of the sacredness of the German oak, if we should use here the language of our enemies."

Frederick Staps sat down opposite the officers, on the trunk of a fallen tree. Drawing a paper from his bosom, he unfolded it, and read as follows:

"The battle of Jena has effaced the disgrace of Rossbach, and decided a campaign in seven days. Since the ninth of October we have proceeded from victory to victory, and the battles of Jena and Auerstadt have crowned all. The Prussian army is dispersed—almost annihilated. The king is wandering about without shelter, and the queen will now regret with bitter tears that she instigated her husband to this senseless and unjust war. Admirable was the conduct of our whole army, soul-stirring the enthusiasm of the brave soldiers for their chieftain and emperor. When there was any momentary difficulty to overcome, the shout of 'Long live the emperor!' resounded, animating all souls, and carrying away all hearts. The emperor saw at the most critical moment of the battle that the enemy's cavalry threatened the flanks of the infantry. He galloped up to order new manœuvres, and the front to be transformed into a square. At every step he was hailed by shouts of 'Long live the emperor!' The soldiers of the imperial guard were jealous of all the other corps who participated in the battle, while they alone were inactive. Several voices were already heard to shout, 'Forward!' The emperor turned and asked, 'What is that? He must assuredly be a beardless youth who wishes to anticipate me as to what I ought to do. Let him wait until he has commanded in twenty battles; then he may claim to be my adviser. The whole guard replied to this rebuke by the unanimous shout of 'Long live the emperor!' and rushed toward the enemy, when, at length, the order was given to charge. The results of this battle are from thirty to forty thousand prisoners, three hundred fieldpieces, and thirty standards. Among the prisoners there are more than twenty generals. The losses of the Prussian army are very heavy, amounting to more than twenty thousand killed and wounded. Our losses are estimated at about twelve hundred killed and three thousand wounded." *

Profound silence ensued when Staps had read the bulletin. The two officers were still lying on the ground, and their dilated eyes gazing at the roof of foliage above them.

"And we must quietly listen to that," said Schill, after a long pause; "and our hearts do not break with grief and rage! heaven does not grow dark, and earth does not open to swallow up the degraded, in order to save them compassionately from the sense of their humiliation! These words will be read by the whole of Europe, and all will know that this insolent conqueror may dare with impunity to speak in insulting terms of our queen, the purest and best of women!"

"He is the master of the world, and will issue many more bulletins of this description, and speak in such terms of many more princes and princesses," said Count Pückler. "He has the power to do so. He needs only stretch out his hand, and kingdoms fall to ruins—nations are at his feet, and cry imploringly: 'Let us be your slaves, and lay your hand on us as our lord and master!' It is useless to resist him. Let us, therefore, submit."

"No," exclaimed Schill, rising, "no, let us not submit. When a whole nation arouses itself, and shakes its lion's mane, there is no hand, even though it were an iron one, that could hold and subdue it."

"But our nation will not rise again—it has been crushed," said Pückler, mournfully. "It is sleeping the sleep of death."

"No, it has not been crushed. No, it will not die!" exclaimed Schill, in an outburst of generous rage. "It is only necessary to instill genuine vitality into its veins, and to awaken it from its lethargy by soul-stirring exhortations, as our young friend here encouraged and strengthened us an hour ago by his noble song. Oh, sing again, friend Staps! Purify the air—which is still infected by the words of the imperial bulletin—purify it by another German song, and let the native oak, which has listened to our disgrace, now hear also manly words. Sing! and may your voice reach our poor soldiers who are closing their eyes on the battle-field; and may it breathe the consolation into their ears, 'You die for Germany, but Germany does not die—she lives, and will rise again!'"

"Yes, I will sing," said Frederick Staps, enthusiastically, "but I wish that every note issuing from my breast would transform itself into a sword, and strike around with the storm's resistless fury!"

"In that case all of us, and yourself, too, would be the first victims," said Pückler, with a melancholy smile.

* Fifth bulletin of the Grand Army.

"Of what consequence are our lives, if they are given up for the fatherland?" exclaimed Staps, fervently. "Oh, believe me, I could, like Mucius Scævola, lay my hand on the red-hot iron, and not wince, but sing jubilant hymns, if I thought that my torture would be useful to my country. Now, I can only sing, only pray, only weep. But who knows whether I shall not become one day a modern Mucius Scævola, a modern Mœros, and deliver the world from its tyrant?"

And suddenly raising his voice, with a radiant face, he began to sing:

Frisch auf! Es ruft das Vaterland
Die Männer in die Schlacht.
Frisch auf! Zu dämpfen Trug und Schand!
Heran mit Macht, mit Macht!
Heran und braucht den Männerleib,
Wozu ihn Gott gebaut:
Zum Schirm der Jungfrau und dem Weib,
Dem Säugling und der Braut!

Denn ein Tyrann mit Lügenwort
Und Strick und Henkerschwert,
Uebt in dem Vaterlande Mord,
Und schändet Thron und Heerd,
Und will, so weit die Sonne scheint
Der einz'ge König sein;
Ein Menschenfeind, ein Freiheitsfeind,
Spricht er: die Welt ist mein!

Verhüt' es Gott und Hermann's Blut!
Nie werde solches wahr!
Erwache, alter deutscher Muth,
Der Recht und Licht gebar!
Erwache! sonder Rast und Ruh,
Schlag' Jeden der dir droht,
Und ruf' ihm deutsche Losung zu:
"Sieg gelt' es, oder Tod!" *

"Victory or death!" shouted the two officers, raising their hands and eyes toward heaven.

"When will the Germans sing and act in this manner?" asked Count Pückler, sadly.

"When we have awakened them!" exclaimed Schill, joyfully. "For that is now our only task: to arouse the Germans, and to remind them of their duty and honor. Every one ought to raise his voice for this purpose, and toil for it. The time is past when the nation was separated from the army, and when the civilian hated the soldier. All these separate interests we buried yesterday on the battle-fields of Jena and Auerstadt. Heaven permitted our army to be defeated for the purpose of teaching us that its heart was demoralized and its vitality entirely gone. But Bonaparte, who believes his successes to be due solely to his own energy and sagacity, is, after all, nothing but the scourge that God uses to chastise us. And, after chastising us sufficiently, the scourge will be cast aside, and lie on the ground, trampled under foot and despised, while we shall rise and become again a glorious nation. But, in order to bring about this change, it is necessary to arouse the Prussians, and fan the flames of their patriotism. Every Prussian must feel and know that he is a soldier of the grand army which we shall one day place in the field against the so-called grand army of Napoleon, and, when the call of 'Rally round the flag!' resounds, he must take up the sword, and proudly feel that the holy vengeance of the fatherland is placed in his hands."

"But suppose there is no one to utter the cry of 'Rally round the flag!' how are the people to appear and take up arms?"

"*We* are there, and *we* shall exhort the people to arms!" said Schill, energetically. "Henceforth, we must not wait until the generals call us; we ourselves must be generals, and organize armies —every one after his own fashion—according to his influence. We must travel over the country, and enlist recruits. As we have no standing army, we must form independent corps, and, by means of raids, harass and molest the enemy. The strongest lion succumbs when stung by many bees. Every Prussian must turn conspirator, and prevail on his neighbor to join the great conspiracy; secret leagues and clubs must be instituted everywhere, and work and agitate until we are united like *one* man, and, with the resistless power of our holy wrath, expel the tyrant who enslaves us!"

"Yes, you are right; we must not give way to timid despondency, but hope and dare every thing. Every one must become a general, and enlist troops, to attack the enemy whenever and wherever he can!"

"I shall also enlist my troops, and lead them against the enemy," exclaimed Staps, with sparkling eyes. "But my troops will not be made of flesh and blood. They will be the songs I sing, and one day I shall march out with them, and challenge the tyrant to mortal combat! Yes, you are right in saying, 'Every one must fight after his own fashion, and according to his power and influence;' let me fight, too, after my fashion!"

"Go and fight, and may the blessings of all the brave follow you!" said Schill, placing his hand on the head of the youth. "Let us take here, under the German oak, a solemn oath that we will devote our fortunes, our lives, and our sacred honor, to the fatherland!"

"Yes," exclaimed Pückler and Staps, "we will take that oath!"

* "Victory or death!" A very popular hymn of that period.

"Let us," said Schill, "then swear to strive for nothing but to deliver Germany from the grasp of the tyrant."

"We swear," continued Schill, "to regard ourselves from this hour as soldiers of the grand army one day to battle for our liberties—to leave nothing undone in enlisting fresh troops—that our life shall be nothing but an inexorable and never-flagging struggle against the usurper—that we will rather die than submit. We vow vengeance against him, and deliverance to the fatherland!"

When all had repeated this oath, Schill said, solemnly, "The German oak has heard our words, and they are registered on high; now, my friends, let us go and enter into a new life—a new future. Let us take care of the body, in order to impart strength to the mind to carry out its schemes. Come, let us go!"

They passed on, and soon reached the village, guided by Staps to the parsonage.

The clergyman joyfully received the officers; his wife prepared her best rooms for them, and pledged herself, like her husband, to protect them at the risk of her life, if French soldiers should arrive, and search the house for wounded Prussians.

"Now you are safe, and I can go," said Frederick Staps, when he was again alone with his friends, their host having withdrawn to prepare every thing that was necessary for the comfort of his guests. "I cannot stay here any longer, for I have promised my father to proceed without delay to Leipsic, and I must keep my pledge to him, as I shall keep it to you. Farewell, friends; may God protect you, and may your deeds fill the world with your glory, so that the poor merchant's apprentice in Leipsic may also hear of it!"

"The poor merchant's apprentice is also a soldier of our grand army of the future," said Schill; "we have enlisted him, and he will go and fulfil his duty to his fatherland."

"Yes, you may depend on it, he will do his duty," exclaimed Staps, "and you will hear of him one day. Farewell, and, please God! we shall meet again!"

"Yes, we shall meet again," said the two officers, cordially shaking hands with the youth, and taking leave of him.

Staps left the room hastily. When he turned round once more at the door, and greeted the friends with a nod, they saw that his eyes were filled with tears.

The clergyman's wife now entered to serve up the dinner she herself had prepared, and there was added a bottle of old Hock from the wine-cellar.

"In the first place, however," said the clergyman to Schill, "I must see and dress your arm, sir; I am quite experienced in dressing wounds, having taken lessons in surgery in order to assist our poor peasants in case of injuries, and render it unnecessary for them to pay large doctors' bills. Let me, therefore, be your surgeon, too."

Schill gratefully accepted his kind offer, and after his wife had brought every thing necessary for dressing a wound, the clergyman examined Schill's arm, and removed the coagulated blood from it.

"It is a very deep flesh-wound," he said, "fortunately the bone is uninjured."

"Then I shall soon be able to use my arm again?" asked Schill, joyfully.

"Not for a few weeks yet, unless you wish to run the risk of losing it entirely. Mortification might set in after the wound has commenced ulcerating. Hence, you must be very cautious, and live as quietly as possible. Your hands are now already burning, and your fever will be very severe. Unfortunately, I have brought up my wine in vain. Both of you, gentlemen, will not be able to drink it to-day, nor to-morrow, nor the day after to-morrow either. For the first three days your fever, as I stated already, will be very serious."

This prediction was fulfilled. For three days the officers were unable to rise from their couch. They were delirious, and unaware of the danger menacing them. A French regiment had come to the village to spend the night, and four of its officers established their headquarters at the parsonage.

But as soon as the French troops had been descried in the neighborhood of the village, the clergyman, assisted by his wife and servants, had removed the wounded, and prepared a safe refuge for them in the hay-loft of his barn, far from the dwelling-house. He himself remained with them, and, while his wife received the French officers, and informed them that her husband was not at home, the good old man was sitting in the hay-loft beside his guests, nursing them with the kindness of a father and the skill of an experienced physician. He had locked the door of his asylum, and a loaded gun and unsheathed sword were within his reach, in order forcibly to drive back the French, in case they should try to penetrate into this hiding-place.

But the danger passed, and the fever abated. Four days afterward the two Prussians were strong enough to continue their journey. The clergyman himself drove them in his carriage to the neighboring town, where they bought two

horses and departed—not together, however, but by different routes. Count Pückler took the road to Breslau; Ferdinand von Schill turned toward Kolberg.

Before parting, they cordially shook hands once more.

"Let us remember the oath under the German oak," said Schill.

"Yes," replied Pückler. "We shall not desert the fatherland, but serve it with our whole strength, and after that is exhausted, we know how to die."

CHAPTER IV.

IN BERLIN.

THE utmost uneasiness and suspense prevailed in Berlin. Several rumors had already reached the capital. It was reported that, on the 14th of October, a battle had taken place between the Prussians and French forces. To-day was the 18th, and no news had been received; nothing definite was known about the result of the battle. But the people said, if it had been favorable to the Prussians, the couriers, to whom joy would have lent wings, would have reached the capital long since; and this continued silence and incertitude seemed to the inhabitants of Berlin more discouraging than any positive intelligence, however disastrous it might be.

No one had the heart to work longer—no one could be prevailed upon to follow his usual avocation; all felt paralyzed by a secret terror; and hastened into the street, as though they hoped some decisive news would fly through the air and put an end to this dreadful suspense.

All Berlin seemed to have met in the streets on the morning of this 18th October, and the people hastened in vast crowds toward the house of the governor of the capital; they consisted today not only of the lower classes of society but the noblest and best had united with them. Men of mind and education, the representatives of art and science, were to be seen among them. There was no distinction of rank or position—every one felt that he was united with his fellow-citizens by the same care, anxiety, and affection; every one knew that all the thousands surrounding him entertained the same wishes and apprehensions, and thus social distinctions were unnoticed. The high-born and the rich, the poor and the lowly, all felt only that they were Prussians—that they were Germans; all were animated by one desire; to learn what had been the result of the battle, and whether the Prussians, faithful to their ancient military glory, had defeated the enemy, or, like the other nations, succumbed to Napoleon.

Thousands hastened, therefore, to the residence of the governor of Berlin, Count von Schulenburg, and called vociferously for him. When the count appeared on the balcony and asked what the crowd wanted, hundreds of voices shouted in thundering chorus: "We want to know whether the army has fought a battle, and whether it was defeated!"

Count Schulenburg shrugged his shoulders, and amid the silence that ensued his ringing voice was heard to say: "I have not yet received any definite intelligence; but so soon as I have it, I shall deem it incumbent upon me to communicate it to the citizens of Berlin."

The governor returned with tottering steps into his house. For a moment the people remained silent, and seemed still to listen to the words they had just heard; but suddenly a loud, powerful voice shouted: "If the governor does not know any thing, perhaps Professor Lange does. He has established a newspaper for the special purpose of communicating to us the latest news from the seat of war; let us go to his house and ask him what the *Telegraph* says."*

"Yes, yes, let us go to his house and ask him what the *Telegraph* says!" yelled the crowd. "Where does Professor Lange live? Who can guide us to him?"

"I can do so," said the same voice that had spoken before. "Professor Lange lives at 22 Leipsic Street."

"Come, come, let us go to Professor Lange! Let us hear what the *Telegraph* says!" shouted the crowd, and hastened across the Opera Place and Gensdarmes Market down Charlotte Street to the residence of the journalist.

"The *Telegraph!* the *Telegraph!*" yelled the people. "We want to know what the *Telegraph* says! Professor Lange, give us the news from the seat of war!"

A window on the first floor was hastily opened, and the pale, frightened face of a gentleman looked out. "What do you want to see me for?" asked a tremulous and hollow voice. "Why do you mention the *Telegraph?*"

"We want news from the army! We want

* The *Telegraph* was a journal founded by a certain Professor Lange, on the day when the Prussian army left Berlin. In his prospectus he spoke in the most fulsome terms of the "invincible army of Frederick the Great," and promised to publish always the latest news from the seat of war.

to know whether it is true that we have lost a battle!"

"God forbid!" said the gentleman at the window. "I have not received any news whatever for the last three days; I know only one thing, and that is, that Cabinet Counsellor Lombard, who was at the headquarters of the army in Weimar, returned last night to Berlin, and is now at his residence. Counsellor Lombard, therefore would be the man to whom you ought to apply."

"Lombard! Lombard!" shouted the crowd, accompanying the name with bitter imprecations. When this name was heard, all faces turned gloomy, and every voice assumed an angry and threatening tone.

"Lombard is to blame for every thing!" grumbled a few here and there, and "Lombard is to blame for every thing!" was repeated louder and louder. The excitement was as when a storm, sweeping over the sea, lashes its waves, until, rising higher and higher, they foam with fury.

"Lombard sides with the French!" reiterated the surging mass. "He has secretly informed the enemy of all the operations of our army, and if the Prussians are defeated, he will be glad of it. We will go to Lombard, and he must tell us all he knows. But woe to him if the news should be bad!"

And the multitude with savage yells hastened down the street, back to the Linden, and toward the residence of Cabinet Counsellor Lombard.

All the window-blinds of his house were closed, as they had been for the last two weeks, since this well-known favorite of Minister von Haugwitz had repaired to the headquarters of the army at Weimar. But Professor Lange had stated, perhaps for the sole purpose of diverting the general attention from himself, and of directing it toward the unpopular cabinet counsellor, that Lombard had returned, and the people believed him.

"Lombard! Lombard!" shouted hundreds of voices. Eyes which had hitherto looked only sad and anxious became threatening; many a fist was lifted up to the closed windows, and many an imprecation uttered.

"If a disaster has taken place, it is Lombard's fault," cried one of the crowd.

"If it is his fault, he shall and must atone for it," exclaimed another.

"He has no heart for Prussia's honor," said a third. "He is a German-Frenchman, and would not object if the whole of Prussia should become a French province. If he knew how to do it, he certainly would not shrink from it, even should he bring captivity and distress upon the king and the queen!"

"He has already done much mischief," shouted another. "The Russian army which was to support ours ought to have been here long ago, but he detained the dispatches in which the king informed the czar that our army had advanced against the French. It is his fault that the Russians have not yet arrived."

"It is his fault that the Russians have not yet arrived!" roared the wild chorus, and the furious men began to rush toward the house. Many armed themselves with stones, hurled them at the walls and broke the windows; others commenced striking with vigorous fists at the closed door.

"Open the door! open the door! We want to see Lombard! He shall account for what he has done!" exclaimed the enraged men. "Woe to him if it be true that we have lost a battle! Woe to him if—"

"Silence! silence!" suddenly thundered a loud, imperious voice. "See, there is a courier!"

"A courier! A courier!" and all rushed back from the house into the street; every eye turned toward the horseman, who approached at full gallop.

As if obeying a military command, the multitude made way for him, but at every step they closed behind him, and, pressing him on all sides, his progress was exceedingly slow.

But the courier, with his gloomy mien and pale cheeks, looked like a bearer of bad news, and when the people had scanned his features, they murmured, "He brings bad news! A disaster is written on his forehead!"

"Let me pass," he said in an imploring voice; "in the name of the king, let me pass!" And as he spurred his horse, the bystanders fell back in alarm.

"'In the name of the king!' the king, then, is still alive?"

"Yes, the king is alive!" replied the courier, sadly. "I have dispatches from him for the Governor of Berlin and Cabinet Counsellor Lombard."

"And what do these dispatches contain?" asked a thousand voices.

"I do not know, and even though I did, I am not at liberty to tell you. The governor will communicate the news to the inhabitants of Berlin."

"Tell us the news!" demanded the people.

"I cannot do so; and, moreover, I do not know any thing about it," replied the courier, who had now reached Lombard's house, and whose horse was again so closely surrounded that it was scarcely able to move its feet.

"Do not detain me, my friends, I beseech you

—let me dismount here," said the courier. "I must deliver my dispatches to Cabinet Counsellor Lombard."

"Oh, let him deliver his dispatches. We can afterward compel M. Lombard to communicate their contents."

"Yes; let him deliver his dispatches," said all; "Lombard shall presently tell us what they contain."

The crowd stood back on both sides of the door, and busy hands were ready to assist the rider in dismounting. But before he had been able to do so, a voice from the rear was heard: "Ask him first where the queen is at present!"

"Yes, yes, where is the queen? where is the queen?"

"The queen?" said he. "I passed her fifteen minutes ago near the city and delivered dispatches to her, too. The queen? Look there!" And he pointed to the Brandenburg gate.

A carriage, drawn by six horses, was seen rapidly approaching.

"The queen! It is the queen!" joyfully shouted every one, and the thousands who had been a moment before so anxious to learn the news, and to call Lombard to account, rushed toward the carriage. Meantime the courier, whose presence seemed to be entirely forgotten, dismounted, and rapped softly at the door. It was at once opened in a cautious manner, and a voice whispered: "Take your horse into the house. You can afterward ride through the garden, and out of the back gate to the governor's residence."

The door was hastily thrown open, and closed as soon as the courier had entered with his horse. No notice was taken of this movement, for every one thought only of the queen, and looked anxiously through the closed coach windows.

"The queen! It is the queen!" exclaimed the people, greeting the beloved lady in the most rapturous manner. All arms were raised in sign of respect, and every voice uttered a welcome of "Long live the queen!"

The carriage window was lowered, and Louisa's beautiful face appeared; but she looked pale and afflicted; her eyes, generally so radiant, seemed dimmed and tearful; yet she tried to smile, and bowed repeatedly to her enthusiastic friends, who rushed impetuously toward her, and, in their exultation, forgetful of the rules of etiquette, seized the reins and stopped the horses.

"We want to see our queen! Long live our Queen Louisa!" cried thousands of voices. Those who stood nearest the carriage, and beheld her countenance, fell on their knees in the fervor of their love, and eyes that never before had wept were filled with tears; for she seemed as an angel of sorrow and suffering. She rose, and, leaning out of the coach door, returned the affectionate greetings of her faithful subjects, and, weeping, stretched out her arms as if to bless them.

"Long live the queen! Long live Louisa!" they cried, and those who held the horses, in order to stop the carriage, dropped the reins, rushed toward the coach door, threw up their hats, and joined in the welcome cry. The coachman, profiting by this movement, drove onward. The people, whose desire had been satisfied in having seen their queen, no longer resisted, and permitted the carriage to roll away.

Louisa closed her coach window, and, sinking back upon the cushions, exclaimed in a heart-rending tone, "Alas! it is perhaps the last time that they thus salute me! Soon, perhaps, I shall be no longer Queen of Prussia!" She buried her face in her hands, and sobbed aloud.

"Do not weep," whispered Madame von Berg, the Queen's intimate friend, who was sitting by her side, "do not weep. It may be a dispensation of Providence that the crown shall fall from your head for a moment, but He will replace it more firmly, and one day you will again be happy."

"Oh, it is not for the sake of my own majesty, and for my little worldly splendor, that I am lamenting at this moment," said the queen, removing her hands from her face. "I should gladly plunge into obscurity and death if my husband and my children were exempted from humiliation, and if these good people, who love me, and are attached to their king, should not be compelled to recognize a foreigner as their master, and bow to him!"

"Even though the people should be subjugated at present," said Madame von Berg, solemnly, "they will rise one day and avenge their disgrace!"

"Would you were a true prophetess!" exclaimed Louisa. "I hope the people will remain faithful to us in adversity, and never forget their love for their king! Yes, I will hope for that day, and pray that it may come speedily. I will weep no more; but remember that I am a mother, and shall see my children again—not to leave them, but to hasten with them to my husband, who is waiting for me at Küstrin. In half an hour we must continue our journey."

Just then the carriage drove past the main guard-house. The soldiers presented arms, and the drums beat.

A melancholy smile overspread the queen's

features. "Do you remember what Prince Louis Ferdinand said to his mother, on the eve of his departure to the army?" she asked in a low voice.

"No, your majesty, I do not remember, and it is possible that I never heard of it."

"The princess believed a defeat of our army to be utterly impossible," said the queen. "She thought Prussia was so strong a bulwark that the proud assault of the French empire would be in vain. 'You are mistaken,' exclaimed Prince Louis Ferdinand; 'you think nothing will change, and the drums will always be beaten when you ride out at the gate? On the contrary, I tell you, mamma, one day you will ride out of the gate, and no drums will be beaten!' The same will happen to us, my dear—we will often ride out of the gate, and no drums will be beaten. But here is our house, and I must hide my tears. I will show a smiling face to my children."

The queen's carriage stopped for the first time at the door-steps of the palace without meeting there the ladies and gentlemen of the court, the high dignitaries and functionaries who had formerly never failed to wait on her. She had come without being expected, but on this day of anxiety and terror the announcement of her arrival would have made no difference; for every one thought only of himself, and was occupied with his own safety. Only a few faithful servants, therefore, received her, and bade her welcome with tearful eyes.

"Where are my children?" exclaimed the queen, anxiously. "Why are they not here to receive their mother?"

"Your majesty," said the palace-steward, in a low voice, "a courier, sent hither by the king, arrived last night, unfortunately having failed to meet with your majesty on the road. The royal princes and princesses set out two hours ago to Stettin, and thence to Grandenz. Such were his majesty's orders."

The queen suppressed the cry of pain which rose to her lips, but a deadly pallor overspread her cheeks. "In half an hour I shall set out," she said faintly. "Pack up only the most indispensable articles for me; in half an hour I must be ready to enter my carriage. I shall, perhaps, overtake my children in Stettin." And she retired to her room, struggling to conceal the emotions that so violently agitated her.

CHAPTER V.

QUIET IS THE CITIZEN'S FIRST DUTY.

THE people in the mean time, gathering in still greater numbers in the broad street under the Linden, returned to the house of Lombard, and saw, to their great disappointment, that the courier was no longer there.

"Now, we want to know the news contained in the dispatches, and Counsellor Lombard must tell us," shouted one of the men standing in front of the house; he then commenced hammering the door with his powerful fists. Others joined him, and to the measure of this threatening music the crowd yelled, "The dispatches! the dispatches! Lombard must come out! He must tell us what the dispatches contain! We want to know whether our army has been defeated, or has won the battle!"

When no voice replied, nor door nor window opened, the mob, whose anger grew more menacing, seized once more their former weapons, the stones, and hurled them at the house. "He shall not escape from us! We will stay here until he makes his appearance, and replies to our questions!" they cried. "If he do not come to us, we will go to him and compel him to hear us!"

"Fortunately, you will not find him at home," whispered Lombard, who was listening at the door. "Every thing is in good order," he added in a low voice. "The dear enraged people will have to hammer a good while before breaking these bolts. By that time I shall be far from here, on the road to Stettin."

The cabinet counsellor glided away with a sarcastic smile to the back gate. There stood his wife, weeping piteously and wringing her hands.

M. Lombard, who had hitherto only smiled, now laughed outright. "Truly," he said, "it is really worth while to make a scene in consequence of this demonstration of the people! My dear, I should think our family ought to know how to manage them! Your father has shaved those stupid fiends often enough, and my father pulled the wool over their eyes,* and, as good children of our parents, we ought to do so too."

"Oh, Lombard, just listen," wailed his wife, "they are knocking at the door with heavy clubs; we must perish if they succeed in forcing it open

* Lombard's father was a hair-dresser, and his wife's father a barber. Lombard liked to jest about his descent, particularly at the dinner-table of some prince or minister. He always alluded to his father in the following terms: "*Feu mon père de poudreuse mémoire!*"

and entering the house. They will assassinate you, for you have heard their imprecations against you."

"*Ma chère*," said Lombard, composedly, "this is not the first time that I discover that the people despise and persecute me. I knew it long ago. These blockheads will never forgive me for being a Frenchman, and for having, consequently, a predilection for France and her heroic emperor. And not only they, but the so-called educated and high-born classes also, hate me intensely. Throughout all Europe I have been branded as a traitor in the pay of Napoleon. Conspiracies were got up everywhere to bring about my removal. All the princes of the royal house—nay, the queen herself, united against me.* But you see, my dear, they did not succeed after all in undermining my position, and the howling rabble outside will have no better success. Indeed, the fellows seem to be in earnest. Their blows shake the whole house!"

"They will succeed in breaking in," said his wife, anxiously; "and then they will assassinate all of us."

"They will do no such thing, for they do not come for spoils, but only for news," said Lombard. "And then, my love, they know just as well as I the German maxim: 'The people of Nuremberg do not hang anybody unless they have got him!' But they will not get me, for there comes my faithful Jean across the yard.—Well, Jean, is every thing ready?" he said to the approaching footman.

"Yes," he replied. "The carriage with four excellent horses is waiting for you, sir. I ordered it, however, not to stop at the garden gate, but a little farther down, in front of another house."

"That was well done, my sagacious Jean. But I hope you did not forget either to place several bottles of Tokay wine and some roast fowl in the carriage for me? The ill-mannered rabble outside will not permit me to-day to lunch at home. Hence I must make up my mind to do so on the road."

"I have not forgotten the wine nor the roast pheasant, your excellency."

"You have packed up a pheasant!" exclaimed Lombard. If the noisy gentlemen outside there knew that, they would be sure to assert that the Emperor Napoleon had sent it to me as a bribe. Now, Jean, come, we will set out. The street is quiet, I suppose?"

"Perfectly so. All those who have legs have gathered in front of the house."

"And all those who have fists are hammering at the door," wailed Mde. Lombard. "Make haste, Lombard—make haste, lest it be too late!"

"You are right. I must go," said Lombard, quietly. "Now listen to what I am going to tell you. So soon as you hear my carriage roll away, be kind enough to repair to the balcony of the first floor and address the people. Their surprise at seeing you will cause them to be silent for a moment."

"But, good Heaven! what am I to say to them?" asked Mde. Lombard, in dismay.

"You are to say to them, 'My husband, Cabinet-Counsellor Lombard, is not at home. He has gone to the governor of Berlin, Count von Schulenburg-Kehnert, and the bearer of dispatches has accompanied him.' Your words will have the same effect as though a pistol were discharged among a number of sparrows—all of them will fly away. You see, my dear, there is a very impressive and dramatic scene in store for you, and my father, *de poudreuse mémoire*, and your father, the barber, would rejoice in their graves if they could see you haranguing the people from the balcony. Farewell, my dear, and manage the affair as skilfully as possible."

He embraced her hurriedly, and was about to leave the garden, leaning on his servant's arm, and as fast as his gouty feet would permit it; but his wife suddenly held him back.

"I cannot go to the parlor," she said in terror, convulsively clinging to Lombard. "Remember, that they are continually hurling stones at our house. Suppose a stone should be thrown into the window and strike my head?"

"My dear," said Lombard, laughing, "I do not believe any stone passing through the window would be immediately dangerous, for you have a hard head, as I have found out often enough. Farewell, and do as I have told you, unless you want the rabble to penetrate into your room. Farewell!"

He disengaged himself rather roughly, and hastened, as fast as his aching and stiffened feet would permit, to the street contiguous to the garden.

His wife waited until the departure of the carriage announced to her that her husband had gone. At the same time the voices outside shouted with redoubled fury, "Lombard! We want to see Lombard!" And their blows thundered louder than ever at the door.

Mde. Lombard sighed; and, commending her body and soul to God, she proceeded to comply

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* Lombard's own words.—Vide Gentz's Diary in his 'Miscellanies," edited by G. Schlesier, vol. iv.

with her husband's instructions, and went to the balcony.

Lombard had prophesied correctly; profound silence ensued when the wife of the cabinet counsellor appeared; hence, every one was able to understand her words, and no sooner had she uttered them, than the crowd really dispersed, as her husband had told her.

"To the governor! Let us go to the governor!" they cried, as they moved up the Linden; but they were attracted by a carriage, drawn by six fiery horses at full gallop. It was the queen, who was about to leave the capital. She looked even paler and sadder than before, and greeted her friends on both sides with a heart-rending, melancholy smile. But they had not time to greet even the queen, or to be surprised at her speedy departure, as they rushed toward the house of the governor, Count Schulenburg.

At his residence, also, the windows were covered up, and the gate of the court-yard closed. But a large white handbill, containing a few lines in gigantic letters, was posted on the side wall. Thousands of piercing eyes were fixed on the paper, and an imperious demand was made to the fortunate men who stood closest to the handbill: "Read! Read aloud!"

"I will read it!" answered a loud, powerful voice. "Be quiet, so as to be able to hear me!"

Profound silence reigned immediately, and every one heard distinctly the words, which ran as follows:

"*The king has lost a battle. Quiet is the citizen's first duty. I request all the inhabitants of Berlin to maintain good order. The king and his brothers are alive.*"

The vast multitude burst into a wail of despair; and when silence ensued, every one seemed paralyzed and stared mournfully at his neighbor. Suddenly the side-gate of the count's court-yard opened, and a carriage, followed by a large baggage-wagon, made its appearance.

At first, the people timidly stepped back, and looked on wonderingly. But no sooner had they recognized in it the governor of Berlin, Count von Schulenburg-Kehnert—no sooner had they discovered that his carriage contained a large number of trunks and boxes, and that the wagon was also filled with baggage, and had satisfied themselves that the governor intended to leave the capital at this hour of terror, than attempts were made to prevent him from setting out. The people stopped the horses, and cried, in tones of exasperation, that it did not behoove the governor to leave the city while it was in danger, and the inhabitants without advice and protection.

Count Schulenburg rose in his carriage. Stretching out his arms in an imperious manner, he demanded silence. When the clamor had ceased, he said, in a conciliatory tone: "My friends! duty calls me hence, for the orders of the king must be obeyed. But you shall not say that I have left the city of Berlin without adequate protection, and that I did not devote my particular attention to its welfare. I have appointed my son-in-law, the Prince von Hatzfeld, civil governor, and he will zealously provide for the security and interests of the people of the capital. Forward, coachman!"

The coachman was about to comply with his master's orders, but some of the crowd still dared to resist, and refused to let the horses proceed.

"The governor must stay here!" they shouted; "it is incumbent on him not to desert the inhabitants of Berlin, but to assist them in the hour of danger!"

"In the hour of danger?" asked the count, with a wondering air. "Why, I leave my whole family here—my children and grandchildren! Would I do so if the enemy threatened the city?"

No one could combat this argument, and reply to the governor's question. The men, therefore, dropped the reins and fell back, when the coachman whipped the horses into a gallop.

They gazed after the escaping count, and looked sadly at each other, asking anxiously: "What shall we do now? What shall we do when the French come?"

"We will meet them sword in hand and drive them back!" exclaimed a young man, with a noble face.

"Yes, we will do so," said another. "There are no soldiers here; hence we ourselves must look out for our own defence. We will form volunteer companies, occupy the gates, and patrol the streets."

"Our army being defeated, a new one has, of course, to be organized," said another. "We must do this; we must hand in our names, and enlist. Let every one who thinks and feels like myself, follow me to the new governor. We will apply to him for permission to organize ourselves for the defence of the city. Come!" Many hastened with ardent impetuosity from all parts of the crowd to join him. Others, seized with admiration and respect, opened a passage, through which the quickly-gathered company of more than three hundred young men marched to the residence of the Prince von Hatzfeld.

But he did not admit the deputation of these brave men. He sent word to them, by his adjutant, that they would receive his definite reply at a later hour. At present he wished them to

go home, and avoid, above all, any riotous proceedings in the streets.

The reply which the Prince von Hatzfeld had promised to the deputation soon appeared on handbills posted at all the street corners. It was as follows: "It would be improper to conceal from the inhabitants of Berlin that French troops may shortly occupy the capital. This unexpected event cannot fail to produce a most painful impression among all classes. Only the most implicit confidence in those who take upon themselves the arduous task of alleviating the inevitable consequences of such an event, as well as of maintaining order, which has become more desirable than ever, will be able to avert the terrible fate which the slightest resistance, or any disorderly conduct, would bring upon the city. The course recently pursued by the inhabitants of Vienna, under similar distressing circumstances, must have taught those of Berlin that the conqueror only respects quiet and manly resignation after such a defeat. Hence I forbid all gatherings and clamor in the streets, as well as any public manifestation of sympathy in relation to the rumors from the seat of war. For quiet submission is our first duty; we should only think of what is going on within our own walls; it is the highest interest to which we ought to devote our whole attention."

CHAPTER VI.

THE FAITHFUL PEOPLE OF STETTIN.

THE hope of the queen had not been fulfilled. Her children had left Stettin an hour before she reached the city.

"I shall immediately continue my journey," said she, resolutely.

"Your majesty, I beseech you to remain here," said Madame von Berg. "You have scarcely had any sleep for the last three nights; last night you did not leave the carriage at all, and hardly took any food. Oh, think of the king, of your children, and economize your strength! Take some rest."

"Rest!" repeated the queen, with a melancholy smile. "There will be, perhaps, no more rest for me on earth! My heart is filled with grief—how, then, can I sleep? But you have reminded me of my husband, of my children, and you are right; I must live for them. Therefore, I will stop here for an hour, and take some refreshment, in order not to give way under the burden weighing down my mind. Come, we will alight and go into the house."

Madame von Berg made a sign to the footman to open the coach door, and followed Louisa into the royal villa, to the rooms usually occupied by their majesties during their visits to Stettin. "When I was last in this room," whispered the queen, "the king and the crown prince were with me. There was nothing but joy in my heart. I was a happy wife, a happy mother, and a happy queen! And, to-day, what am I?" She heaved a profound sigh, and, sinking down on the sofa, pressed her face upon the cushions. "Into what an abyss I have been hurled from my heaven!" she murmured in a low voice. "Once a happy sovereign—now a poor, fleeing woman, who can excite only pity. Oh, mother, mother, God be praised that you do not behold my distress!" She clasped her hands, and her trembling lips whispered prayers to Heaven. Her large blue eyes were raised with an expression of fervent supplication, and tears rolled like pearls over her cheeks. She sat a long while pondering over her misfortunes, and shuddering at the prospects of the future.

Finally, Madame von Berg ventured to approach and arouse her from her meditation.

"Your majesty," she said, in an imploring voice, "you promised to take rest, for the sake of the king and of your children. Remember the burden of care weighing down the heart of his majesty. Remember that his grief would be more intense if he should see your eyes reddened with weeping, and find you prostrated in your distress."

"He shall not see it," said Louisa. "In his presence I will conceal my tears, and seem hopeful and courageous. Let me, therefore, now at least, pour out my overwhelming sorrow, for tears are the only consolation of the afflicted. When I am with my husband once more, I shall try to smile, and only weep in secret. Are you now satisfied, my faithful friend?"

"Your majesty had graciously promised me to take some refreshment, but the footman has long since announced that dinner is ready."

"Come, Caroline, we will eat," said the queen, rising hastily, and laying her hand on her friend's shoulder.

She kept her word, and did eat a little, trying to become more cheerful by conversing with Madame von Berg about her children and her approaching reunion with her husband.

"Believe me, Caroline," she then said gravely, "it is not vanity and longing for worldly splendor that causes me to bewail our present trouble. For

my part, I would gladly lead a private life, and be contented in retirement and obscurity, if I could only see my husband and my children happy at my side. But the king is not allowed to be as other men are—merely a husband and father; he must think of his people, of his state, and of his royal duties. He is not at liberty to lay down his crown any more than we to destroy voluntarily the life we have received from God. 'With it or on it,' said the heroic mothers of Sparta to their sons, when delivering to them the shield with which they went into battle. And thus the king's ancestors, who have bequeathed the crown to him, call from their graves: 'With it, or buried under it!' It is the inheritance of his fathers, which he must leave to his children; he must fight for it, and either triumph or perish with it. That is the reason why I weep, and see nothing but years of disaster and bloodshed in store for me. Prussia must not make peace with Napoleon; she must not, in hypocritical friendship, give her hand to him who is her mortal enemy. She must remain faithful to the alliance which her king has sworn on the coffin of Frederick the Great to maintain; and France will resent this constancy as though it were a crime. But, in spite of her anger, we must not recede; we must advance on our path if we do not wish to lose also our honor, and if history is not to mention the name of Frederick William III. in terms of reproach. Germany hopes that Prussia will save her—the whole of Europe expects us to do our duty to the fatherland, and this duty is to wage war against the tyrant who wants to subjugate Germany, and transform her into a French province—to resist him as long as we have an inch of territory or a drop of blood in our veins! See, my friends, such are the thoughts that move my heart so profoundly, and cause me to weep. I clearly foresee the great misfortunes that will crush us in case we should proceed on the path which we have entered, but I am not allowed to wish that Prussia should turn back, for we may be permitted to be unfortunate, but never to act dishonorably. And I know these to be the king's views, too—he—but hark, what is that?" she interrupted herself. "Did it not sound as if a noisy crowd were approaching? The tumult draws nearer and nearer! If they are French soldiers, I am lost!" She rushed to the window, and looked anxiously down on the street.

A vast multitude approached, yelling with rage, and threatening with their hands a pale, trembling man walking between two others who had seized him, and whose eyes closely watched every motion he made. That man was Cabinet-Councellor Lombard, who, on his escape from Berlin, had safely reached Stettin.

Just as he was about entering his carriage, in order to leave the latter city, a few of the bystanders recognized and detained him. Those who were in the streets soon gathered around and curiously looked on during his altercation with the men who had stopped him.

Suddenly one of them turned to the crowd and exclaimed in a loud voice: "Do not permit this fellow to depart. It is Lombard, the Frenchman, the traitor; he has assuredly come to Stettin in order to prevent the queen from continuing her journey, or to inform the enemy whither she is going. Let us arrest him, that he may not betray her!"

"Yes, yes, arrest him; do not release him until long after the queen's departure," cried the people. Threatening men surrounded the traitor on all sides, and anxiously scanned his pale, cowardly face.

"Let me go, kind friends, let me go!" begged Lombard, and now all his arrogance and haughtiness had disappeared. "You do me the greatest injustice; I am a faithful servant of the king, and have come to Stettin in order to wait on her majesty, and to offer my services to her."

"He lies! he lies!" said those who had recognized him. "Let us go with him to the royal villa; the queen is there. If she wants to see him, she will order him to be admitted; if not, he shall witness her departure."

"Yes, he shall witness her departure," exclaimed the rest approvingly; "let us go to the royal villa!"

Dragged, pushed, and carried along, Lombard arrived, followed by thousands, at the royal residence, which was situated at the lower end of Broad Street, near the parade-grounds.

The carriage and horses stood in front of the house, and every thing was ready for the queen's departure. But Louisa was still at the window, and looked from behind the curtains down on the vast mass which filled the whole street. Suddenly she uttered a low cry; and hastily placing her hand on her friend's shoulder, she pointed to the street. "Look," she whispered, trembling, "look! there is the evil demon who has done so much to bring about the present calamities of our country; it is Lombard, my most dangerous, nay, I may say, my only enemy! He hates me, because he knows that I distrusted him, and asked the king for his dismission. He has dealt treacherously with Prussia—I know and feel it, and felt convinced of it long before this time. The presence of this man proves that some new calamity

is menacing me, for he is plotting my ruin. I wonder what brought him here?"

"Let me go!" cried Lombard just then, in a loud and ringing voice. "Let me go! I will and must see the queen!"

"See me?" said Louisa, in terror. "No, I will not see him; I have nothing to do with him."

In her excitement, and anxious to see what would occur, she came forth from behind the curtain, and appeared in full view at the window. The people greeted her with loud cheers, and then turned their eyes again toward Lombard. He had also seen her, and now raised his hands in a suppliant manner, saying: "Oh, I beseech your majesty, call me up to your room! I have come to offer my services and to communicate important news. Grant me an audience!"

But she did not stir; she had apparently not heard his words, and her eyes, usually so gentle, now looked gloomy and angry.

"The queen does not call him!" exclaimed hundreds of voices on the street. "She does not want to have any thing to do with him! He is a traitor."

"What have I done, then, kind friends, that you should call me a traitor?" asked Lombard. "State the crimes you charge me with, so that I may justify myself!"

"We will state them to you!" said the men who had detained him, and who were wealthy and highly-esteemed merchants of Stettin.

"Yes, yes, Mr. Grunert and Mr. Pufahl, state his crimes to him, and prove to him that he is a traitor!"

"We will; be quiet and listen!" replied Mr. Grunert.

"The people are going to sit in solemn judgment over him," whispered the queen; "they will ferret out his crimes and punish him for them!"

Breathless silence reigned now. A chair was brought from one of the adjoining houses, and Lombard compelled to mount it, so that every one might be able to see him. It was a strange sight that of his tottering, feeble form, with a pale and terror-stricken face, rising above the crowd, whose eyes were all turned toward him, and who cast glances like daggers at him.

"He is a traitor, and I will prove it to him," repeated Mr. Grunert, closely approaching Lombard. "In 1803, when the king sent him to Brussels to negotiate with Bonaparte, about an honorable peace between Prussia and France, he allowed himself to be bribed. He exercised an influence humiliating and disadvantageous to us; but Bonaparte bribed him by paying him the sum of six thousand *Napoleons d'or*. Deny it if you can!"

"I deny it," replied Lombard. "It is true, I suffered myself to be duped by that monster for a moment. When I saw Bonaparte in 1803 in Brussels, he managed to inspire me with confidence in his magnanimity and greatness of character. But the deception did not last long, and soon I perceived that this incarnate fiend would not stop in his career until he had destroyed all existing thrones and states.* But I deny ever having received money from him—I deny ever having accepted any presents from him. And the best proof of it is that I have not any property whatever, but am as poor as a church mouse. My wife has scarcely a decent parlor for the reception of her friends; and as for myself, a plain arm-chair and a tobacco-pipe were always the goal of my wishes."

"You are poor, because you squander at the gaming-table and in secret orgies what you obtain by your intrigues," said Grunert, sternly. "Your poverty does not absolve you, for it is the direct consequence of your dissipated life. You are a traitor. It was owing to your machinations in the interest of Napoleon that our army, last year, when it ought to have taken the field with the Austrian and Russian forces against France, was placed so late on the war-footing, and finally returned to its garrisons without having drawn the sword. You are to blame for the disgraceful treaty of Vienna, for Count Haugwitz is merely a tool in your hands. You rule over him. You laughed and rejoiced when the treaty of Vienna had been concluded, for you are a descendant of the French colony of Berlin, and you have no heart for the honor of Germany and Prussia."

"He is a traitor!" cried the people; "do not let him go! Detain him! He shall not betray the queen!"

The crowd approached Lombard in the most menacing manner, and were about to drag him from his chair, but Grunert and Pufahl warded them off, and protected him with their broad and vigorous bodies.

"You do not yet know all he has done," exclaimed Mr. Pufahl, in a powerful voice. "I will tell you about the last and most infamous instance of his treachery. It is his fault that we lost the battle of Jena—his fault alone."

"What am I to hear?" whispered Louisa.

Perfectly beside herself, she approached closer

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* Lombard's own words.—Vide Gentz's "Miscellanies," vol. ii., p. 194.

to the window, and listened in breathless suspense to every word that was uttered.

"Well, let me tell you what Lombard has done," added Mr. Pufahl. "In the middle of last month our king sent Lieutenant-Colonel von Krusemark with an autograph letter to St. Petersburg, in which he informed the czar that he intended to declare war against France, and requested the latter to send him the assistance that had been agreed upon between them. Lieutenant-Colonel von Krusemark was accompanied by a single footman only, whom he had taken into his service for this special purpose, and who had been warmly recommended to him. During the whole journey the colonel kept the dispatches on his bare breast. It was only when he had arrived at St. Petersburg that he laid them for a little while upon a table, in order to change his dress, and deliver them immediately to the czar. The servant was engaged in arranging his clothes. M. von Krusemark went for a minute into an adjoining room, and when he returned, the footman had disappeared with the dispatches. All the efforts made by Krusemark and the police to recover the important papers were fruitless. They found neither them nor the servant. Krusemark, therefore, had to send a courier to Berlin, and ask for new instructions. This caused a delay of several weeks, in consequence of which the Russian army was unable to be here in time to join our troops and assist them in attacking the French. We would not have lost the battle of Jena, if the king's dispatches had been delivered to the Emperor of Russia at an earlier moment, and if his army had set out in time for the seat of war. We would not have lost the battle, if the dispatches had not been stolen. Now listen to what I am going to tell you: *That footman had been recommended by Lombard to Lieutenant-Colonel von Krusemark, and was a near relative of the former!*"

"He is a traitor!" cried the people, "it is his fault that we lost the battle of Jena! But he shall atone for it! Woe to the traitor!"

"Oh, your majesty!" exclaimed Madame von Berg, in terror, "just see! the furious men are dragging him from his chair. They will assassinate him. Have mercy on him and save his life!"

"Yes," said the queen, "stepping back from the window, "yes, I will protect him, but I will also protect myself."

And hurrying across the apartment, she opened the door of the anteroom, where the major of the garrison of Stettin and a few staff-officers were assembled.

"Major," said she, in a commanding voice, "hasten down-stairs, and arrest Cabinet-Counsellor Lombard. Take him to the guard-house, where you will detain him until the king send you further orders. I will report in person to his majesty what I commanded you to do."

It was high time to interfere, in order to save Lombard's life. The enraged people had already thrown him down, and, regardless of the supplications of the two merchants, commenced belaboring him unmercifully, when the major appeared with a few soldiers and police officers.

"Order! order!" he called in a loud voice. "Order, in the name of the queen!"

The noise immediately died away; and those who had already seized Lombard turned around and stepped respectfully aside to let the major pass.

"In the name of the queen," he repeated, placing his hand on Lombard's shoulder, and assisting him to rise, "I arrest you, Cabinet-Counsellor Lombard! You will accompany me to the guard-house."

But Lombard, unable to stand, had sunk down on the chair, half dead with terror.

"You see, sir, I am unable to accompany you," he groaned, faintly, "I cannot walk."

"My soldiers will carry you, then," said the major; making a sign to them, he added, "Take the prisoner in your arms, and carry him to the guard-house."

Amid the loud applause of the crowd the order was immediately obeyed. The soldiers seized Lombard, and started off with him. A large number followed, laughing and deriding him, and congratulating each other that their queen would now be able to continue her journey uninterruptedly, as the traitor had been arrested.

After reaching the guard-house, M. Lombard was locked up in one of the common cells, but the major dared not condemn the influential and powerful friend of Minister von Haugwitz to lie on the hard bench of the criminals, and to eat the ordinary prisoner's fare. He, therefore, sent to the first hotel in Stettin, and requested the landlord to furnish Lombard with bedding and food, and to send both immediately. But the soldiers returned without having obtained either one or the other.

"Well, will the landlord send the articles?" asked the major.

"No, sir," was the reply; "the landlord declined doing so. He said, he would not furnish a traitor with any thing, no matter what price he offered him."

The major tried in vain to look angry. The reply pleased him just as much as the chastisement

inflicted on Lombard by the people had pleased him previously.

"Then go to another landlord," he said, "and make the same request of him. If he should also decline complying with it, go to a third. In short, go and find a landlord who is willing to send bedding and food to Cabinet-Counsellor Lombard."

The people, who had gathered in front of the guard-house, heard the words of the soldiers as well as the renewed order of the major, and accompanied them to find a landlord willing to furnish bedding and food for the traitor.

An hour elapsed before they returned, still accompanied by the crowd, whose numbers had vastly increased. The major was in Lombard's cell, and had left orders for the soldiers to report to him there. He anticipated, perhaps, the answer they would bring back to him, and wished the prisoner to hear it.

He who had hitherto sat at tables laden with delicacies and slept only on silken beds—the epicurean and sensual spendthrift—lay on the hard wooden bench, groaning with pain and terror, when the soldiers entered his cell. The major stood at the window, and drummed on the panes.

"Well," he said, "do you at length come, and bring bedding and food for M. Lombard? But why did you tarry so long, you lazy fellows? Did you not know that until your return he would have to lie on the bench here like a common felon?"

"We could not return at an earlier time, sir," replied they. "We have gone from hotel to hotel; we have informed all the landlords in Stettin of your orders, and requested them to furnish Cabinet-Counsellor Lombard with bedding and food. But all of them made the same reply—all of them answered: 'Tell the major that I shall not comply with his orders. I will not furnish a traitor with any thing!'"

"Oh!" groaned Lombard; "then they want me to die with my sick, bruised body on the hard boards here!"

"No!" exclaimed the major, "I will obtain another couch for you. I will immediately go to the governor and procure an order from him that will compel the hotel-keepers to furnish you with the necessary articles."

Half an hour afterward he returned to Lombard, who had meanwhile vainly tried to sleep.

"Now, sir," said the major, "your wishes will soon be fulfilled. The governor has ordered the proprietor of the hotel *Zum Kronprinzen*, under pain of severe punishment, to furnish you with all necessaries, and I have sent some of my men to him with this written order. They will doubtless speedily return."

A few minutes later, in fact, the door opened, and the soldiers carried a bed into the cell; two others followed with smoking dishes.

"Well," said the major, "then the landlord of the hotel that I sent you to has no longer refused to give you the required articles? The governor's order had a good effect."

"Yes, sir, it had a good effect. But the proprietor of the hotel *Zum Kronprinzen* sends word to you, that inasmuch as the governor had issued so stringent an order, nothing remained for him but to obey; but as soon as he should be compelled no longer to furnish M. Lombard with any thing, he would smash the dishes and plates from which the cabinet counsellor had eaten, and burn the bedding on which he had slept."

M. Lombard had apparently not heard these mortifying words. Assisted by his footman, who had been sent for, he hastily rose and sat down at the table to dinner.

In the evening the major repaired with a few officers to the hotel, and inquired for the landlord.

He came in, somewhat confused, and convinced that the major would censure him for his conduct. The latter, however, went to meet him, and, with a kindly smile, offered him his hand. "Sir," he said, "these gentlemen and I have taken it upon ourselves to express to you, in the name of all our comrades, our delight at the brave and manly reply you made to-day, when compelled to furnish Lombard, the traitor, with food and bedding. The officers of the garrison have resolved to board with you, for we deem it an honor to be the guests of so patriotic a man."

CHAPTER VII.

THE QUEEN'S FLIGHT.

Louisa waited till Lombard had been carried away amid the jeers of the people; then, accompanied by her friend, she hastened down-stairs in order to continue her journey. Many persons were still assembled in the street, who, instead of following Lombard, had preferred to see the queen once more. They received her with enthusiastic cheers, and heartily wished her a safe journey.

"Give our best wishes to our king, and tell him that we will be faithful to him as long as we live!" exclaimed a voice from the crowd.

"We thank the queen for ordering the traitor

to be arrested!" exclaimed another. "Now we need not have any fears for her, and know that she is able to continue her journey without incurring any danger whatever."

Louisa greeted her subjects smilingly, and lowered the windows of the carriage for the purpose of returning their salutations, and of being seen by them.

"Yes," she said, when the carriage rolled through the gate into the high-road, "yes, I hope the prophecy of these good men will be fulfilled, and that I shall safely reach my destination. Now that Lombard has been arrested, I am satisfied of it, for he had followed me in order to inform the enemy of my whereabouts; I feel convinced of it. But the judgment of Heaven has overtaken him, and he has received his punishment. Oh, how dreadful it must be to stand before the people with so bad a conscience, so pale and cowardly a face, and to be accused by them! We are able to bear up under the greatest afflictions when our soul is free from guilt! And therefore I will meet the future courageously and patiently, hoping that God will have mercy on us. Henceforth there will be but one duty for me, and that is, to be a faithful mother, and a comforter to my husband in his misfortunes. Oh, Caroline, my heart, which was lately, as it were, frozen and dead, is reawakening now—it is living and throbbing with joy, for I shall see again my husband and my children! If all should forsake us, love will remain with us, and he whose heart is full of love will not be forsaken by the Lord."

She leaned back and closed her eyes. Profound peace was depicted on her handsome face; her brow was calm and cloudless, and a sweet smile played on her lips. Grief had not yet marked this noble and youthful countenance with its mournful yet eloquent traces, and its handwriting was not yet to be read on her expansive forehead.

"Oh," whispered her friend to herself, contemplating the beautiful slumbering queen, "oh, that grief might pass away from her like a dark cloud—that no thunderbolt burst forth from it and strike that beloved head! But I am afraid the lightning will at last blight all the blossoms of her heart. O God, give her strength, nerve her in her sufferings, as Thou hast blessed her in her happiness! She is sleeping; let her slumber be peaceful and refreshing, so that it may invigorate her mind!" Madame von Berg leaned cautiously, in order not to disturb the queen, into the other corner of the carriage, which rapidly drove along the high-road.

The journey was continued uninterruptedly from station to station; in every town and village the people, as soon as they had recognized her, hastened to procure fresh horses for her, and crowds gathered everywhere to cheer her on her way. She had already passed through Frankfort, and stopped in the village of Rettwein in front of the superintendent's house. The footman entered and asked in her name for another set of horses. The superintendent looked at him uneasily and gloomily. "I will get them directly," he said; "I will go myself to the stable and harness them, in order not to detain the queen unnecessarily." He left the house hastily, and the footman returned to the carriage.

Louisa had risen and contemplated with a melancholy air the deserted landscape. For the first time since the beginning of her journey she was not welcomed on her arrival. Nobody seemed to know or care that it was the queen who was seated in the carriage. Only a few tow-headed peasants' children, in ragged, dirty dresses, rushed toward the superintendent's house and stared at her, without saluting or thanking her for her kindly nods.

"We shall frequently ride out of the gate, but no drums will be beaten," murmured she, with a faint smile, and sank back on the cushions.

Time passed, and no horses made their appearance. The queen glanced uneasily at her watch. "We have been here nearly an hour," she said; "this long delay renders me uneasy."

She rose once more and looked again out of the coach window. The same silence prevailed. The children were still in front of the house, with their fingers in their mouths, staring at the carriage. At a distance the dull lowing of the cows in their stables and the barking of dogs were to be heard. No human being, except the few children, was to be seen; even the superintendent did not make his appearance, although he knew that the queen was waiting at his door. Just then, however, a laborer in a long blouse, with heavy wooden shoes, came out of the house and remained at the door, staring with his small blue eyes at the royal carriage.

"I do not know why," murmured Louisa, uneasily, "but this silence frightens me; it fills my heart with a feeling of anxiety which I cannot well explain. It seems to me as though every thing around me were breathing treachery and mischief, and some great danger were menacing me. Let us set out—we must leave this place. Why do not the horses come?"

"Will your majesty permit me to call the footman, and ask him to hurry up the postilion?" said Madame von Berg, leaning out of the window.

"Tell them to make haste," she said to the approaching footman. "Her majesty wishes to continue her journey immediately."

"The horses are not yet here," exclaimed he anxiously; "the superintendent promised he would fetch and harness them himself, and he does not return."

Some one set up a loud, scornful laugh, which reached the queen's ears. She bent forward and looked uneasily at a laborer who was standing at the door with folded arms. The footman turned, and asked him, indignantly, why he laughed. The man looked at him with twinkling eyes. "Well," he said, "I laugh because you are looking for horses, and have been waiting here for an hour already. But they will not come, for the superintendent has driven two of them through the back gate into the field, and then mounted the third, and rode off!"

The queen uttered a low cry, and placed her hand convulsively on her heart; she felt there a piercing pain, depriving her of breath, and turning her cheeks pale.

"Then the stable is empty?" said Madame von Berg.

"Yes, and there is not a hack even in the whole village; the peasants have taken them all to Küstrin, lest the French should take them."

"Are the French, then, so near?"

"The superintendent said this morning he had seen them at Bärwalde, two miles from our village."

"Let us start—let us set out without a minute's delay," said Louisa, anxiously grasping her friend's arm. "The superintendent is a traitor, and has left the village in order to inform our enemies that I am here. Oh, Caroline, we must escape, and if I cannot do otherwise, I shall pursue my journey on foot!"

"No, your majesty, there must and will be some expedient," replied Caroline, resolutely. "Permit me to alight for a moment, and speak to the postilion who drove us hither."

"I shall alight with you," exclaimed the queen, rising and trying to open the coach door.

Madame von Berg wished to keep her back. "What," she exclaimed in dismay. "I am sure your majesty will not—"

"Speak personally to the postilion? Yes, I will. He is a human being, like all of us, and at this hour happier and more enviable than we are. Perhaps he will have mercy on his sovereign!"

She hastily left the carriage, and ordered the footman to conduct her to the postilion, who, during the last hour, had fed and watered his horses, and was just about to ride back with them to his station. He hastened to obey the order, and approached the queen, who stood trembling near the carriage by the side of Madame von Berg.

"Speak to him first," said Lousia to her friend.

"You have heard that we cannot get any other horses," said Madame Berg. "Her majesty wants you, therefore, to drive us to the next station."

"That is impossible, madame," said the postilion; "my horses are exhausted, and I myself am so weary that I am almost unable to stand, for I have been on horseback for three days. We had to take fugitives to Küstrin all the time."

"If you drive us thither rapidly and without delay, you shall be liberally rewarded; you may depend on it," replied Madame von Berg.

"All the rewards of the world would not do me any good, inasmuch as neither I nor my horses are able to continue the journey to Küstrin," he replied, shrugging his shoulders. "I would gladly comply with your request, but I cannot."

"You cannot?" asked the queen, in her sonorous voice, "have you any children?"

"Yes, madame, I have children. Two boys and a girl."

"Well, suppose you should hear that your children were in Küstrin, that some great danger was menacing them, and that they were anxiously crying for their father. What would you do then?"

"I would gallop with lightning speed, not caring if the trip killed my horses, could I only reach my children!"

"Well," said the queen, with a gentle smile, "although you are a father, and love your children so ardently, yet you are cruel enough to refuse your assistance to a mother who wishes to hasten to hers? I beseech you take me to them, for they are looking with anxiety for me." As she uttered these words her eyes filled with tears, and her lips trembled.

The man was silent, and gazed with an air of surprise at Louisa's beautiful face. "Madame," he said, after a pause, "pray enter the carriage again. I will take you to Küstrin—you shall be with your children in an hour. But I tell you, madame," he added, turning to Madame von Berg, "I do not go for the sake of the reward you have promised me, and I will not take any money. I go because it would be infamous not to reunite a mother and her children. Now, make haste." He turned round without waiting for a reply, and began to prepare for the journey.

The queen gazed after him with beaming glances, and then raised her eyes to heaven. "I

thank Thee, my God," she murmured. "Give me strength that I may still believe in the human heart, and that such a discovery as I have made to-day as to the treachery of one man may not harden my heart! Come, Caroline, let us enter; in an hour we shall be with my children; oh, in an hour, I shall see the king!" An expression of delight overspread her face like sunshine, and she hastened to the carriage with light, elastic steps.

The postilion whipped the horses. The village was soon left behind, and they proceeded rapidly toward their destination.

"How fast the kind-hearted man drives!" said Louisa. "He does not do so for the sake of the queen, but because he thinks of his children, and commiserates a mother's heart. Oh, I confess, my heart was painfully moved by the discovery of the superintendent's treachery, but the all-merciful God sends me this excellent man. I shall ever remember him, and, please God, I will reward him for his kindness, by taking care of his children."

"But I trust your majesty will also remember the traitor, and cause him to be punished," said Madame von Berg, indignantly. "He has committed a great crime against his queen and against his fatherland, and ought to be called to account."

"If he has deserved it, let God punish him," said Louisa, gently. "I shall try to forget him, and I beg you not to say any thing about it to the king. I am afraid, my dear, we should have much, very much to do, if we were to punish all those who betray us. The superintendent was the first faithless subject we met, but he will not be the last. Let us forget him. But what is that? Why does the postilion drive so fast? It seems as if the carriage had wings. What does it mean?"

In fact, they dashed along the road like an arrow, and, as though this were not sufficient, the anxious voice of the footman was heard shouting, "Forward, postilion! Forward, as fast as possible!"

"There is something wrong, and I must know what it is!" exclaimed the queen. She rose from her seat, and opened the front window. "Tell me honestly and directly," she said to the footman, "why does the postilion drive so rapidly?"

"If your majesty commands me to do so, I must tell the truth," replied he. "We are pursued by French chasseurs. They are galloping behind us on the high-road. I can already distinguish their uniforms."

"And shall we be able to escape them?" asked Louisa, with the semblance of perfect calmness.

"We hope so, your majesty. If the horses can run fifteen minutes longer, we are safe, for then we shall be in Küstrin."

"Tell the postilion that I shall provide for the education of his children, if we reach Küstrin in fifteen minutes," replied the queen.

She then sank back for a minute like a bruised reed. A heart-rending scream escaped her, and she raised her hands in despair. Presently she again became composed and looked back from the window, so as to be able to see the approaching danger.

Like lightning they proceeded along the high-road, but the chasseurs gained upon them, and the distance rapidly decreased. The queen's piercing eyes could already distinguish the faces of her enemies. She heard the loud shouts and oaths with which they sought to increase their speed. She leaned back, and a fearful pallor overspread her cheeks, but she was still calm.

"Listen to what I tell you, Caroline," she said, in a grave, solemn voice, "I cannot survive the disgrace of being taken prisoner by the French. I will not adorn, as a modern Cleopatra, the triumphal entry of the modern Augustus. To live and to die honorably is my motto. I prefer death to ignominious captivity. Tell it to my husband and my children. And now to the will of God I commit myself. The moment that a French soldier extends his hand toward me, this friend will deliver me!"

She drew a small dagger from her bosom, and grasped it firmly and resolutely.

"What are you going to do?" exclaimed Caroline, in terror.

"Hush!" replied the queen, "my resolution is irrevocable. Sooner death than the disgrace of ridicule! Let us see what is going on."

She leaned once more out of the carriage, which was still dashing along with the utmost rapidity. The chasseurs were fast approaching. The panting and snorting of the foaming horses were already heard—the flashing, triumphant eyes of the soldiers distinctly seen. Every second brought them nearer and nearer. Louisa withdrew her head. Her right hand firmly grasped the dagger. In breathless exhaustion, and as pale as though dying, she awaited her fate.

Suddenly they rolled with great noise over a paved street—they stopped—and Louisa thought it was an angel's voice, when she heard the words, "There is Küstrin! We are saved!" She started up, and looked once more out of the window. Yes, she was saved. The chasseurs were galloping off again, and close at hand was the first gate of the fortress of Küstrin. She had constantly

looked back toward the pursuing enemy, not toward her destination, and now that she was saved, it seemed to her a miracle, for which she thanked God from the bottom of her heart.

They passed through the gate, but could only drive at a slow pace. An immense chaos of vehicles loaded with bedding, furniture, trunks, cases, boxes, and bags, obstructed the passage. Shrieks, lamentations, and oaths, resounded in the wildest confusion. All the inhabitants of the suburbs and neighboring villages had fled hither with their movables, to seek protection behind the walls of the fortress.

The queen had again concealed the dagger in her bosom, and looked up to heaven with eyes full of fervent gratitude.

"I am saved!" she whispered; "I shall see again my husband and my children. Life is mine again!"

The passage became wider. They were able to advance more rapidly, and soon reached the market-place. A general in uniform was just crossing it. When he was passing near her, the queen joyfully exclaimed:

"Köckeritz! Where is the king?"

"Oh, Heaven be praised that your majesty has arrived! The king is here. He is standing among the generals in front of the house yonder."

They stopped. The coach door opened, and the pale, melancholy face of the king looked in. Louisa stretched out her arms toward him. "Frederick! my dear, dear husband!" she exclaimed, and, encircling his neck with her arms, imprinted a kiss on his lips. He did not utter a word, but drew her with an impetuous motion into his arms and carried her into the house, regardless of the rules of etiquette, through the crowd of generals, who bowed and stepped aside. She clung tenderly to him and supported her head with a blissful smile on his shoulder. He now placed the beloved burden slowly and cautiously into an easy-chair; then crossed the room and opened the door leading into an adjoining chamber.

"Come, come, your mother is here!" said he, abruptly, and two boys ran immediately into the room, with a loud, joyous exclamation.

"My sons, my beloved sons!" cried Louisa, stretching out her hands toward them. They rushed to her, clasping her in their arms and kissing her. The queen pressed them to her heart, shedding tears, half of grief, and half of happiness at being reunited with her family. Not a word was spoken; only sighs and sobs, and expressions of tenderness, interrupted the silence. The king stood at the window, looking at his wife and sons, and something like a tear dimmed his eyes. "I would gladly die if they could only be happy again," he murmured to himself; "but we are only in the beginning of our misfortunes, and worse things are in store for us!"

He was right; worse things were in store for them. Day after day brought tidings of fresh disasters. The first was, that Erfurt had capitulated on the day after the battle of Jena—that the French occupied it, and that a garrison of four thousand men had surrendered at discretion. Then came the news that the French, who had not met with the slightest resistance, and were driving every thing before them, had crossed the Elbe and were moving on Potsdam and Berlin. The royal couple learned at the same time that Count Schulenburg had left Berlin with the troops without permission, and solely on his own responsibility, and that he had forgotten in his hurry to remove the immense quantity of arms from the arsenal. Another day dawned and brought even more disastrous tidings. The French were reported as approaching the fortress of Küstrin by forced marches!

A panic seized the garrison. Most of the officers and privates, and the whole suite of the king, declared loudly, "Peace only can save us! Further resistance is vain, and will increase our calamities. Submission to the conqueror may save what remains." Minister von Haugwitz used this language, and so did Generals von Köckeritz and von Zastrow, and so thought the commander of Küstrin, though he did not utter his sentiments.

The king listened to all these supplications and suggestions with grave and gloomy composure. He did not say a word, but looked sometimes with an inquiring glance at the pale face of the queen. She understood him, and whispered with a smile: "Courage, my husband, courage!" And he nodded to her, and said in a low voice: "I will have courage to the bitter end! We cannot remain here, for the report that the French are approaching has been confirmed. Let us go to Graudenz!"

Louisa laid her hand on the king's shoulder, and looked tenderly into his eyes. "Whither you go, I go," she said, "even though we should be compelled to escape beyond the sea or into the ice-fields of Siberia; we will remain together, and so long as I am with you, adversity cannot break my heart."

Frederick kissed her and then went to make the necessary arrangements for their departure, to give his final orders to the commander of Küstrin, M. von Ingelsheim: "Defend the fortress to the last extremity, and capitulate under no circumstances whatever."

The queen seemed calm and composed so long

as her husband was at her side. But when he had withdrawn, she burst into tears; sinking down on a chair, she buried her face in her hands and sobbed aloud.

"You are weeping!" whispered a soft, sweet voice. "Oh, dear mother, do not weep," said another, and two heads leaned on her shoulders—the heads of her oldest sons. She took her hands from her face, and shook the tears from her eyes. She kissed her sons, and, placing both of them before her, gazed at them a long time with an air of melancholy tenderness.

"Yes," she said, and while she spoke her voice became firmer, and her face radiant—"yes, I am weeping; nor am I ashamed of my tears. I am weeping for the downfall of my house—the loss of that glory with which your ancestors and their generals crowned the Hohenzollern dynasty, and the splendor of which extended over the whole of Prussia—nay, over all Germany. That glory has, I say, departed forever. Fate has destroyed in a day a structure in the erection of which great men had been engaged for two centuries. There is no longer a Prussian state, a Prussian army, and Prussian honor! Ah! my sons, you are old enough to comprehend and appreciate the events now befalling us; at a future time, when your mother will be no more among the living, remember this unhappy hour. Shed tears for me, as I do for the ruin of our country! But listen," she added, and her eyes beamed with enthusiasm, "do not content yourselves with shedding tears! Act, develop your strength. Prussia's genius, perhaps, will favor you. Then deliver your nation from the disgrace and humiliation in which it is at present grovelling! Try to recover the now eclipsed fame of your ancestors, as your great-grandfather, the great elector, once avenged, at Fehrbellin, the defeats of his father against the Swedes. Let not the degeneracy of the age carry you away, my sons; become men and heroes. Should you lack this ambition, you would be unworthy of the name of princes and grandsons of Frederick the Great. But if, in spite of all efforts, you should fail in restoring the former grandeur of the state, then seek death as Prince Louis Ferdinand sought it!"

CHAPTER VIII.

NAPOLEON IN POTSDAM.

THE unheard-of and never-expected event had taken place; the son of the Corsican lawyer, the general of the Revolution, had defeated the Prussian army, compelled the royal family to flee to the eastern provinces, and now made his triumphal entry into their capital! On the afternoon of the 24th of October he arrived in Potsdam; the royal palace had to open its doors to him; the royal servants had to receive him as reverentially as though he had been their sovereign!

Napoleon was now master of Prussia as well as of all Germany. But his classic face remained as cold and calm in these days of proud triumph as it had been in the days of adversity. His successes seemed to surprise him as little as his early misfortunes had discouraged him. When ascending the broad carpeted staircase, he turned to Duroc, his grand marshal, and beckoned him to his side. "Just notice, grand marshal," he said, in so loud a voice that it resounded through the palace, "just notice the strange coincidence. If I remember rightly, it is just a year to-day since the fine-looking Emperor Alexander of Russia arrived here in Potsdam, and paid a visit to the queen. Please ask the steward who received us at the foot of the stairs, whether it is not so."

Duroc went away, and soon returned with the answer that his majesty had not been mistaken; it was just a year to-day since the Emperor of Russia arrived in Potsdam.

A faint smile overspread Napoleon's face. "I will occupy the same rooms which Alexander then occupied," he said, passing on.

Duroc hastened back, to give the necessary orders. Napoleon walked down the corridor with ringing, soldier-like footsteps, followed by his marshals, and entered the large portrait-gallery of the Prussian monarchs, who looked down on him with grave eyes.

The emperor paused in the middle of the hall and glanced over the portraits with a gloomy air. "All those men had a high opinion of themselves," he said, in a sullen tone; "they were proud of their high birth and of their royal crown, and yet death has trampled them all in the dust. I will now take upon myself the task of death: I will annihilate this Prussia which dared to take up arms against me, and who knows whether this gallery of Prussian kings will not close with Frederick William III.? Nothing on earth is lasting, and sovereigns now-a-days fall from their thrones as over-ripe apples from trees. The crown of Prussia fell to the ground on the battle-fields of Jena and Auerstadt!"

The portraits of the Prussian rulers looked down silently on the triumphant conqueror, and neither his scornful voice, nor the haughty glances with which he contemplated them, disturbed their tranquillity. Not a voice answered these arrogant

and insulting words; the marshals stood silent and respectful, and still seemed to listen to the voice of the oracle which had just announced to the portraits of the royal ancestors of the present king the downfall of their house. But Napoleon's brow, which had momentarily beamed with proud thoughts, was again clouded. Joining his hands on his back, he crossed the hall to the large central window, from which there was a fine and extensive view of the lawn, with its old trees and splendid statues, and beyond, of the Havel and its hilly banks. He gazed gloomily at this landscape, then turned and looked again at the pictures, but only for a moment, as though he would threaten them once more, and make them feel again the angry glance of him who had come to dethrone their descendant and appropriate his crown. Then he fixed his eyes on the portrait of a handsome woman whose large blue eyes seemed to gaze at him, and her crimson lips to greet him with a winning smile. Quite involuntarily, and as if attracted by the beauty of this likeness, he approached and contemplated it long and admiringly.

"Truly," he said, "that is a charming creature. That lady must have been wondrously lovely, and at the same time surpassingly graceful and high-spirited."

"Sire," said Duroc, who had followed him and overheard his words, "sire, she is still wondrously lovely, and, as your majesty says, surpassingly graceful and high-spirited. It is the portrait of Queen Louisa of Prussia."

A dark expression mantled Napoleon's face, and, bending an angry glance on Duroc, he said, "It is well known that you were always foolishly in love with the Queen of Prussia, and, according to your statement, one might believe there was no woman in the whole world so beautiful as she is." He turned his back on the painting and stepped to the next one: "And this, then, doubtless, is Frederick William III.?"

"Yes, sire, it is the portrait of the reigning king."

"Of the reigning king?" repeated the emperor, with a scornful smile. "It is a very good-natured face," he added, looking at the full-sized portrait; "and as I behold his gentle, timid air, I comprehend that he allows himself to be directed by advisers, and follows the will of others rather than his own. But this little King of Prussia is taller than I thought!"

"Sire, he is about as tall as the Grand-duke of Berg," said Duroc.

"As Murat?" asked Napoleon. "It never seemed to me that he was as tall as that. Is not Murat of my own height?"

"No, sire, he is higher than you!"

"You mean he is taller than I," said Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders. "Height of stature is of no consequence. Frederick II. was much smaller than his grand-nephew, and yet he was the greatest of Prussia's kings. We will afterward pay him a visit at Sans-souci. Until then, adieu, gentlemen. Come, Duroc, conduct me to the rooms of the Emperor Alexander!"

He greeted the marshals with a quick nod, and then followed Duroc into the long suite of halls and brilliant rooms which, only a year ago, had been newly decorated and furnished with royal magnificence for the reception of the czar.

"These kings and princes 'by the grace of God' live here very pleasantly," muttered Napoleon in an undertone; "they know better how to build and furnish their residences than to preserve them to their children. Well, I am a good architect, and have come to reconstruct the royal palace of Prussia. Do you think, Duroc, that those ingrates will thank me for it?"

"They will see that the lion must have his share," said Duroc, "and they will, doubtless, be thankful if any thing is left to them. Sire, here we are in the czar's bedroom! The steward told me every thing was arranged in it precisely the same as in the days when the Russian emperor was here. Nobody has slept in this bed since."

"I must sleep in it," said Napoleon, quickly, "and I believe I shall sleep in the royal Prussian palace, and in the bed of the Russian emperor, as comfortably as I did in the Tuileries and in the bed of Louis XVI."

He threw his small three-cornered hat with a contemptuous gesture on the bed, which was surmounted by a velvet canopy, embroidered with gold, and then, his arms crossed behind him, commenced slowly pacing the room. Duroc dared not disturb him, and turned toward the paintings and engravings hanging on the walls. The emperor walked a long while gravely and musingly; his brow grew more clouded, and he pressed his lips more firmly together. Suddenly he paused before Duroc, and, being alone, spoke to him no longer in the tone of a master, but with the unreservedness of a friend.

"Legitimacy is a terrible power, Duroc," said he, hastily; "it is what I cannot vanquish with all my cannon. Sovereigns and princes know it full well, and that is the reason of their obstinacy. They oppose their ancestors to my victorious eagles, and when, by virtue of my right as conqueror, I enter their palaces and take possession of them, I find there the proud company of their forefathers, who seem to look scornfully down on me,

and tell me, 'You are after all but an intruder and usurper, while we are and shall remain here the rightful owners.' I am sick and tired of playing this part of usurper. I shall overthrow all dynasties, expel all legitimate sovereigns—and there shall be no other throne than mine! I shall be at least the first legitimate monarch of the new era!"

"And expelled princes will sit in some nook of your immense empire," said Duroc, laughing, "and sing to the people the same song of legitimacy; and it will be listened to as one of the fairy stories of childhood, in which they believe no more."

"But they shall believe in *my* legitimacy!" exclaimed Napoleon, quickly. "I will be the first of the Napoleonic sovereigns." His brow was clouded again. "But it is true," he murmured, "in order to found a dynasty, I need a son. I must have legitimate children. It will be no fault of mine if circumstances compel me to divorce Josephine; for I will not, like Alexander of Macedon, conquer exclusively for the benefit of my generals. I need an heir to my empire."

"Sire, you have one in the son of the empress, noble King Eugène."

"No," exclaimed the emperor, gloomily, "the son of the Viscount de Beauharnais cannot be heir to my throne. My blood does not flow in his veins. Oh, why did the young Napoleon die! I had destined him to succeed me, because he was of my blood, and a scion of my family.* Poor Josephine! if her tears and prayers could have saved the child's life, I should never have thought of taking another wife."

"What!" exclaimed Duroc, in dismay, "your majesty thinks of repudiating the empress!"

"My heart never will repudiate her," replied Napoleon, drawing a sigh. "I shall always love her, for she deserves it. She is generous and high-minded, good and graceful. I never loved another woman as I love her—and never shall. Judge, therefore, what a cruel blow it will be to my heart, should I be compelled to separate from her."

"If you should, sire," said Duroc, in a voice quivering with emotion,—"if you repudiate the empress, you would thereby sign your own death-warrant, and Josephine would not survive it."

"She will have to survive it like myself," exclaimed the emperor, impetuously. "I shall suffer no less—nay, I shall suffer more than she, for she never loved me as I love her. Her tears will fall for the lost splendor of the throne—not for her husband. But I shall bewail the beloved wife."

"No, sire," said Duroc, almost indignantly, "you are unjust. The empress loves you—you alone. She accepted the crown reluctantly and with tearful eyes, and will not weep when she loses it. She will mourn for her husband only, whom she adores, and not for the crown which adorns but also oppresses her brow."

"Ah, what a warm advocate the empress has!" exclaimed Napoleon, smiling. "Do you really believe that she loves me so disinterestedly?"

"Sire, I am convinced of it, and so is your majesty. The empress loves in you her dear Bonaparte, and not the emperor. She loves you more ardently than any other woman could do. Sire, permit an old, well-tried friend and servant to warn you. Do not banish Josephine from your heart, for she is your guardian angel."

Napoleon did not reply immediately, but looked melancholy and abstracted.

"It is true," he said, after a long pause, "Josephine brought success; until I married her every thing around me was forbidding and dark. She appeared like a sun by my side, and we rose together."

"Sire, all will darken again, if you suffer your sun to set."

"Ah, bah! these are nothing but fantastic dreams!" exclaimed Napoleon, after a brief silence. "I am the architect of my fortune—I alone. Josephine did not assist me in erecting my edifice; she only adorned it with her smiling grace. I shall do what fate and my people have a right to expect of me, but I do not say that it must be done immediately. I have time enough to wait; for as yet I do not stand on the pinnacle to which I am aspiring. My plans are not yet accomplished. I hope that I shall not die at so early an age as my father. I need ten years more to carry out my purposes. A sovereign ought not to set too narrow limits to his wishes; but mine—they are boundless. Like the conqueror of Darius, I must rule the world, and I hope that my desire will one day be fulfilled. Nay, I feel convinced that I and my family will occupy all the thrones of Europe. Then it will be time for me to have a wife who will give an heir to my empire, and a son to my heart. Until then, my friend, keep the matter secret; do not mention what I have told you. The portraits of the old kings, with their surly faces, have impressed me very disagreeably, and it is in defiance of them that I say, I will one day have a wife—a daughter of the Cæsars—who will think it an honor to bear a son to the modern Cæsar! When the time comes, however, I shall

* The oldest son of the King of Holland, Napoleon's brother, and of Hortense, Josephine's daughter, had been declared Napoleon's successor and adopted son. He died of croup, in 1805, in his seventh year.

remind you of this hour, and then request you, in the name of the confidence which I have reposed in you, to prepare my poor, beloved Josephine for the blow that is menacing her and myself, and which I then shall ward off no longer. But a truce to these matters! Let us go to Sans-souci. Come!"

"Sire, before your majesty has dined?"

"Ah, you are hungry, then? You would like to dine?"

"Sire, I believe all the gentlemen entertain the same desire. None of us have tasted food for eight hours."

"Eight hours, and you are already hungry again? Truly, this German air exerts a bad effect upon my brave marshals. Like the Germans, you want to eat all the time. Well, let it so be; as we are in Germany, I will comply with your wishes. Let us dine, therefore, and afterward go to the country-palace of Frederick II. Be kind enough to issue your orders, grand-marshal. Let the horses be ready; we shall set out as soon as we have dined. Tell Roustan to come to me!"

Napoleon was now again the sovereign, and it was in this capacity that he dismissed Duroc, who left the room with a respectful bow. Roustan, who had already heard the order in the anteroom, glided past him to assist Constant in the emperor's toilet.

CHAPTER IX.

SANS-SOUCI.

Duroc hastened once more through the rooms and halls into the corridor, where the palace-steward came to meet him.

"Dinner is ready, grand marshal," he said.

"And have you set another table in the adjoining room?"

"Your orders have been punctually obeyed."

"Be good enough, then, to conduct me to the large dining-hall."

The steward bowed in silence, and led the way. All the marshals and generals were already assembled when Duroc entered.

"Gentlemen," he said, smiling, "his majesty is now occupied with his toilet, and Roustan has assured me that it would last half an hour. We have half an hour, therefore, to take our dinner." Followed by the others, he went into the next room. A table had been set there, and appetizing odors invited them to sit down to it.

"Now, steward, have every thing served up as quick as possible. We have but twenty minutes left." During that time there reigned profound silence, only now and then interrupted by a word or a brief remark. The marshals contented themselves in making the viands disappear, and emptying the bottles. Duroc, who had frequently cast anxious glances at the large clock, now rose hastily. "Gentlemen," he said, "our time is up, and we must be ready for the emperor's dinner. I will go to his majesty, and conduct him to the dining-hall. I hope all of you have eaten well, so as not to need much of the official repast to which we are going. The emperor has graciously ordered us all to dine with him. Be so kind as to repair to the hall."

When Napoleon entered, a few minutes later, preceded by Duroc, he found all the marshals assembled. The dinner commenced, and he, it seemed, was no less hungry than his generals, for not only did he eat his soup with the utmost rapidity, but when he saw one of his favorite dishes placed near him, he smiled and nodded kindly to the grand marshal, who was standing at his right, and presented him a glass of wine.

"See how attentive these dear Germans are!" he said. "If I am not mistaken, this is my favorite dish, *fricassée à la Marengo.*"

"Yes, sire, I sent the bill of fare hither last night by the courier who announced your majesty's arrival, and I am glad to see that it has been punctually attended to."

"So these German cooks know already how to prepare a *fricassée à la Marengo?* Who has taught them this?"

"Your majesty; your majesty is now the cook and butler for all Germany—everybody has become familiar with your favorite dishes."

The emperor smiled. Placing a piece of bread on his fork, he dipped it into the dish, and repeated this several times; and when the grand marshal placed before him a silver plate, filled with a portion of the same, he commenced to eat rapidly. Aware of his habit, his attendants had taken care that the pieces of meat were sufficiently small, and the whole dish not too hot. He began to eat the meat with a fork, and the sauce with a spoon, but he seemed to regard both as too inconvenient; for he laid them aside, and, after the fashion of the Turks, used his delicate white hands, adorned with diamond-rings.*

* Constant, for many years Napoleon's devoted *valet de chambre*, gives in his reminiscences a detailed account of the emperor's habits, and writes as follows about his mode of dining: "The great rapidity with which the emperor was accustomed to eat was frequently very injurious to his health. One of the immediate effects of

Scarcely twelve minutes had elapsed when he rose. The grand marshal immediately presented to him a golden basin and a napkin to wash his hands.

Napoleon's guests had done well in dining beforehand; for, as the servants did not attend to them so quickly as to their master, and as they, moreover, were not able to eat so fast as he, they would assuredly have risen hungry from the table.*

"To horse, gentlemen!" exclaimed Napoleon. "Let us ride over to Sans-souci, and do homage to the manes of the king who was a philosopher and a great general at the same time."

The streets of Potsdam were deserted as the emperor and his brilliant suite rode through them. All the windows were closed; the citizens were nowhere to be seen; only a crowd of idle boys followed the imperial cavalcade. The soldiers of the grand French army alone greeted the emperor with joyous cheers outside of the city, where they were encamped. Potsdam thought, perhaps, of its king, who had immortalized it, and was sad and ashamed that those whom Frederick the Great had routed in so glorious a manner at Rossbach now made their triumphal entry into his capital.

Napoleon's brow was gloomy; this silence of the population was disagreeable and oppressive. It seemed to him to be a sign of the hostile spirit of the Prussians; and as he was riding slowly, his head slightly bent forward, along the avenue toward Sans-souci, he muttered: "This is a malicious and infamous trick! The haughty nobility will still oppose me, but I will crush them. They must not succeed, however, in making me angry, but I shall chastise those who have induced the citizens to remain at home, and not to greet me." And, thoughtfully, he rode on toward the country-seat of Frederick the Great.

No one was at the palace to welcome him but the castellan, a venerable man, who, with a few aged servants in faded liveries, received the all-powerful conqueror at the open folding-doors of the hall leading to the terrace. Napoleon looked at him with a rapid, piercing glance. "You lived in the period of Frederick II.?" he asked hastily.

"Yes, sire, we were fortunate enough to serve the great king," said the castellan, in faultless, fluent French. "Hence, the honorable task has been intrusted to us to watch over his sacred resting-place, and to protect it from injury."

"The name of the great king is a sufficient protection for this house," said Napoleon. "My soldiers have a profound respect for true greatness; they will not dare to desecrate this sanctuary. Be my guide, my friend. Let me see the sitting-room of your king!"

"Of the present king, sire?" asked the castellan.

Napoleon smiled. "I think there is but one king in Sans-souci," he said, "and that is Frederick II. Conduct me to his sitting-room!" and rapidly crossing the semicircular marble hall, he walked toward the side-door which the castellan opened.

"Sire," he said, solemnly, "this is the king's sitting-room; it is still furnished precisely as when he lived in it. It has undergone no change whatever."

Napoleon entered; his marshals followed him. None of them uttered a word; every one seemed involuntarily to tread lightly, as if he feared to disturb the silence reigning in this room, sacred by its great reminiscences. The emperor walked rapidly into the middle of the room; there he paused with folded arms, and his large dark eyes glided lowly from object to object. The marshals moved softly around, and, on contemplating the old-fashioned furniture, their ragged silken covers, the plain desk with the inkstand placed near the window, the large easy-chair, shrouded in a ragged purple blanket, smiled disdainfully and whispered to each other that this was a room entirely unfit for a king, and that one might purchase better and more tasteful furniture of any second-hand dealer in Paris. Napoleon, perhaps, had overheard their words, or at least noticed their whisperings, for he bent an angry glance on them. "Gentlemen," he said, "this is a place which deserves our profound respect. Here lived one who was a greater general than Turenne, and from whose campaigns we all might derive instruction. Alex-

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this habit was, that he did not eat very cleanly. He liked to use his fingers instead of a fork, and, indeed, instead of a spoon. Great care was taken always to place a favorite dish before him. He partook of it in the manner above described, dipping his bread into the sauce, which did not prevent the other guests from eating of the same dish, or at least such as wished to do so, and there were few who did not. I have even seen some who pretended to regard this favorite dish as a way of doing homage to the emperor. Napoleon's favorite dish was a sort of chicken-fricassée, called, in honor of the conqueror of Italy, '*fricassée à la Marengo.*'"—Constant, Mémoires vol. ii., p. 56.

* The guests invited to the imperial table always dined beforehand. The emperor, in the haste with which he ate, did not notice that the others had no time to do so. Once, when he departed from the table, and Eugène, his stepson, rose immediately after him, Napoleon turned to him, and said: "But you have had no time to eat?" "Pardon me," replied the prince, "I dined beforehand."—"Mémoires de Constant," vol. ii., p. 55.

ander the Great himself would have admired Frederick's battle of Leuthen."

The aged castellan, who was standing at the door, raised his head, and with a kind glance seemed to thank Napoleon for the tribute he had paid to the manes of the heroic dead.

The emperor's eyes were now fixed on the large clock placed on a gilded pedestal. It was a masterpiece of the period of Louis XV., and adorned in the most brilliant roccoco style. The large dial, with the figures of colored enamel, rested in a frame and case of splendidly-wrought gold, and this was surmounted by a portrait of the Emperor Titus, with the inscription, "*Diem perdidi.*"

"Is that the clock which the king caused to be purchased from the heirs of the Marquise de Pompadour?"

"Yes, sire, it is. It has always stood in this room, since he purchased it. Frederick the Great prized it very highly, and consulted it exclusively until his death. And it seemed to know that he liked it, for when he closed his eyes, the clock stopped and never went again."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, quickly, "since the death of Frederick the government of Prussia, it seems, really did not know the time any more. And what about that ragged old easy-chair? Did the king use it, too?"

"Sire," said the castellan, solemnly, laying stress on every word he uttered—"sire, the great king died in that chair; his head rested on the pillow now lying on the seat, and he was covered with that blanket."

The emperor rapidly approached; the marshals followed his example and walked toward it on tiptoe. He stood before it; his arms folded, his lips compressed, contemplating it. Behind him stood the marshals, whose indifferent countenances and curious glances contrasted strangely with the pale face of their master. Not far from them, near the door, stood the white-haired castellan; his hands clasped, and his head bowed mournfully on his breast.

Suddenly the room was filled with light; the sun, which had hitherto been hidden by clouds, burst forth and shone brilliantly; golden beams fell upon the easy-chair of Frederick the Great, and surrounded it, as it were, with a halo.

"This, then, is the death-bed of the great king," said Napoleon, musingly. "The gods did not permit him to fall on the battle-field. Disease and age vanquished the hero of the Seven Years' War, and he died not amid the triumphs of his soldiers, but solitary and alone! May Providence, in His mercy, preserve us from such a fate!" And turning quickly to the castellan, he asked, "Were you present when the king died?"

"Yes, sire, I was; for I was his *valet de chambre.*"

"Tell me the last words he uttered."

"Sire, he spoke repeatedly, but so inaudibly and rapidly that we did not apprehend him. The last words which we were able to understand were: 'Give me back my soldiers of the Seven Years' War! I am tired of ruling over slaves!'"

"Strange, strange," murmured Napoleon; "he was tired of ruling over slaves! as though it were possible to rule over free men! Ah, I should like to have known this king, who was such an autocrat, and yet despised slaves! who wielded the sword as skilfully as the pen! to whom the booming of the cannon sounded as melodious as the notes of his flute—who made verses with Voltaire, and won battles with Schwerin and Ziethen! He was able to do every thing, and we have not seen his equal!"

"Oh, sire," murmured the marshals, "your majesty forgets—"

"Silence, gentlemen!" he exclaimed, in an angry voice, pointing with his outstretched arm to the easy-chair, "do not flatter me in *this* room. I wish I had known Frederick the Great, for I believe we should have understood each other."

"Sire," said the castellan, "it is true, his majesty did not know you; nevertheless, he dreamed of you."

Napoleon hastily turned toward him and asked: "What? He dreamed of me? Tell me all about it. Approach!"

The castellan, obeying the sign made to him, advanced a few steps slowly and hesitatingly.

"Sire," he said, "it was a few years after the Seven Years' War. I had just entered the king's service, and was on duty during that night; that is to say, I slept in the anteroom, and had received strict orders to awaken the king at a fixed hour in the morning, and to enter his bedroom during the night as soon as he called me, or if I should hear any noise. Suddenly I heard the cry, 'Fire, fire!' I rushed immediately into the bedroom, but no fire was to be seen. My master lay on his couch, groaning, breathing heavily, and evidently under the influence of bad dreams. I, therefore, took the liberty to awaken him. 'Ah,' said he, heaving a deep sigh, 'I am glad you awakened me; I had a weird, terrible dream, and I will relate it to you. I dreamed I was standing on the terrace of Sans-souci, and around me I beheld my state and all my palaces close together, and behind them I thought I could descry the whole world, with all its cities and countries; it was spread out before my eyes like a painting of

NAPOLEON IN POTSDAM.

wondrous beauty, and I was rapturously gazing at it. All at once the sky grew dark; black clouds passed over it; profound darkness covered the beautiful world, and dreadful shrieks and groans resounded through the air. But from the midst of the black clouds a bright, dazzling star burst like a rocket, and set fire to every thing, until all countries were in ruins, and all cities burned down. And as I saw that, I cried in my anguish, 'Fire! fire!' Fortunately, you came and awakened me.' That, sire," said the castellan, drawing a deep breath, "that was the dream. The king went on to say: 'The dream, I am sure, is a portentous one, and some remarkable event will doubtless happen in the course of this night. Write down every thing I told you, and remember the date and year!' I did as his majesty ordered me; I wrote down the date, the year, and even the hour in which the dream occurred."

"Was the dream really a portentous one? Did any remarkable event occur in that night?"

"Yes, sire, a very remarkable event occurred in that night, but his majesty did not hear of it; he died too early."

"When did he have that dream?" asked Napoleon, fixing his eyes on the old man, who composedly bore the searching gaze.

A pause ensued. The castellan replied: "Sire, Frederick the Great had that dream on the 15th of August, 1769."

"On my birthday!" ejaculated Napoleon.

"On the 15th of August, 1769," repeated the old man, "at three o'clock in the morning."

"The hour of my birth," muttered the emperor to himself. After a short pause he turned again toward the castellan, and a strange, sarcastic smile played on his lips.

"The star fell from the sky, and set fire to all the palaces and countries?" he asked.

The castellan nodded.

"And you believed that the dream referred to me, and that I am the fallen star?"

"Sire, I only related what the king had dreamed, and in what night and in what hour he had the remarkable dream. His majesty spoke frequently about it, and all his friends heard of it. But nobody was able to interpret it. He died without obtaining the solution."

"But you have solved it," said Napoleon, sneeringly. "I am the fallen star, and you think I have come to fulfil that dream?"

"Sire, I—"

"I shall burn down your palaces and scourge your country," added he, harshly. "Why did you irritate me. I did not commence the war; since you desired it, I gave it to you. But tell your friends and the good citizens of Potsdam that the dream of their king will not be entirely fulfilled. It may be that I shall be compelled to destroy royal palaces, but the house of the citizen and the cabin of the peasant will not feel my wrath, nor will I lay waste your fields. Tell the good denizens of this city—tell them not to be afraid of me; for never shall I assail their rights and privileges, nor interfere with their interests. And now, gentlemen, let us proceed!" He quickly crossed the room, and entered the adjoining apartment.

"Sire, this is the reception-room of Frederick the Great," said the castellan, who had followed. "On that table lies the full suit in which his majesty gave his last audience—his uniform, his order of the Black Eagle, his hat and sword."

Napoleon hastened to the table, and seized the sword. "Ah, the sword of Frederick II.," he exclaimed, with sparkling eyes. "He often wielded it with a victorious hand, and that hat covered a head adorned with the laurel-wreath of the poet and the great general! These are trophies that I prefer to all the treasures of Prussia. What a capital present for the Invalides, especially for those who formed part of the army of Hanover! They will be delighted, no doubt, when they see in our possession the sword of him who beat them at Rossbach! And as my dear brother, Frederick William III., has conferred the order of the Black Eagle on me, I suppose he will permit me to take this decoration as a souvenir of the greatest king of the house of Hohenzollern. What about the bell that is placed beside the hat?"

"Sire," said the castellan, mournfully and hesitatingly, "it is the bell which the king used during his whole reign to call the gentlemen waiting in the anteroom, and the footmen at night."

"That bell shall stand henceforward in my cabinet and on my desk," said Napoleon. "Grand marshal, order all these things to be packed up and to be sent immediately to Paris, and add to them also the clock in the other room—the clock that was so faithful to the great king as to stop at his death, and to refuse to mark the time for any one else. I will wind it up, and the clock of Frederick the Great must strike again for me. Conduct us to the other rooms, castellan."

The old man cast a long and melancholy look on the precious relics that were about to be taken from him, and took leave of them with a profound sigh. He then conducted the party to the other rooms. He showed them the library, where Frederick, during the last years of his life, had spent every hour when not occupied with government affairs, longing for no other society than that of

his books. He then took them to the rooms in which Voltaire had lived, and showed the emperor a paper on which the king had written verses that Voltaire had corrected and revised. Napoleon contemplated every thing with the greatest attention, and then caused himself to be conducted to the fine long hall, in which Frederick, accompanied by his dog, used to take his daily walk when the weather was too bad for him to do so in the open air. The walls of this hall were adorned with many paintings and engravings—all, however, did not apparently belong to the period of Frederick; for there were among them paintings and engravings representing his last hours, and his lonely nocturnal funeral.—Others again depicted the scene of young Frederick William II. standing by the corpse of his great uncle, and swearing with tearful eyes, his hand placed on the head of Frederick, that he would be a just and good ruler to his people.

"And what does this picture represent?" asked Napoleon, pointing to an engraving by the side of the above-mentioned painting.

"Sire," said the castellan, in confusion, "it is a copper-plate, representing the king's tomb. It does not properly belong here, but has been placed here temporarily. The artist sent it hither with the request to place it somewhere in Sans-souci, and I hung it up in this place until my master disposes of it in some other way."

"But what about this one?" asked the emperor, whose piercing eyes were fixed on another engraving. "There is the tomb of Frederick; two men, in full uniform, are standing by its side; a beautiful lady is with them, and all three are raising their hands in an odd manner. Ah, ah, now I comprehend: that is last year's scene, when the Emperor Alexander took leave of the king and queen at the grave of Frederick the Great, and swore eternal friendship to them as well as eternal enmity to France? That is what this engraving represents, I suppose?"

"Yes, sire, it is," said the castellan, timidly.

Napoleon, with a flashing glance, called his marshals to his side. "Behold there, gentlemen, one of those theatrical scenes with which people here in Prussia were declaiming against me, while I was silent, but arming against them," said he with a sneer. "If the King of Prussia does not fulfil the other oaths he has taken more faithfully than this one, I pity his people; but he has incurred the retribution of the gods, who insist on it that men shall fulfil their promises or they will be crushed. We have seen enough of the place where Frederick the Great passed his life; let us pay a last visit to him in his tomb. Where is it?"

"In Potsdam, sire, in the church close to the palace."

"Very well. Come, gentlemen. And you, castellan, do not forget that the dream has not been altogether fulfilled. The 'fallen star' is only a devouring fire to the kings who bid him defiance, but not to the people who obediently submit." He nodded, stepped from the hall into the anteroom, and then into the vestibule, where the horses were ready for him and his suite.

The old man gazed mournfully after the brilliant cavalcade. "He looks like a marble statue," he muttered, "and I believe that he has no heart in his breast. Every thing in him is made of stone. If he had a heart, he would not dare to come hither and appropriate with a rapacious hand the sacred relics of our great king. I must really go and see whether his commands to that effect will be carried out or not." And he left the hall with youthful alacrity, hastening through the apartments back to the reception-room.

Yes, the commands had been obeyed! The hat and sword, the order of the Black Eagle, and the bell, had disappeared. The old castellan uttered a groan, and proceeded to the sitting-room. His anxious eyes glanced at the spot where the clock had stood. That was also gone. But he heard men talking and laughing in the anteroom, and when he hastened hither, he saw some of the emperor's servants, who, in compliance with the orders of the grand marshal, were engaged in packing up the relics in a basket, and jesting at what they called the strange and insignificant spoils which the emperor had obtained here. The white-haired servants of Frederick the Great were standing close by, and witnessing with tearful eyes the removal of treasures so sacred on account of the reminiscences connected with them. The men were just engaged in placing the clock on the other articles in a basket. The castellan approached hurriedly and placing his hand on the dial, said in a low voice, "Farewell! The eyes of Frederick the Great have often gazed at you. His eyes were also stars, but not fallen stars, and they did not scorch and burn, but rendered the people happy. Farewell, faithful clock, that stopped with grief in the last hour of my king! When *his* last hour comes, announce it loudly and joyously, and commence going again, for the worst time will be over then, and the fallen star will cease burning. Farewell, and strike that hour as soon as possible!" *

* The clock remained in Napoleon's possession and accompanied him to St. Helena. It stood on the mantelpiece in his small parlor, and is mentioned in his will. He bequeathed it to his son, the Duke de Reichstadt, in the

Looking even more gloomy than on leaving the city the emperor rode with his suite again through the deserted, silent streets of Potsdam. The brilliant cavalcade moved as slowly and solemnly as a funeral procession toward the church, the lower vault of which contained the coffin with the remains of Frederick. The sexton and his assistants, bearing the large bunch of keys and a blazing torch, conducted the emperor through the dark and silent corridors, and opened the heavy, clanking iron doors leading into the vault. Napoleon entered. For a moment he stood still on the threshold and gazed in surprise at this plain, gloomy vault, the walls of which were not adorned with trophies, nor with any decorations whatever, and at that humble wooden coffin, which stood so bare and solitary in the middle of the sombre room. Behind him were his marshals, who looked at the strange scene with an air of curiosity and astonishment.

"Ah," said Napoleon, gently turning his head toward them, and pointing with his right hand to the coffin, "a man must have distinguished himself by many great deeds, and obtained immortal glory, to need thus no earthly pomp and splendor!"

He approached closely to the coffin; folding his arms on his breast, his lips firmly compressed, he gazed long and steadfastly at it. The blaze of the torch shed a bright light on his face, and as his pale head alone was distinctly visible in the darkness, the beholders might have believed one of the marble statues of the Cæsars on the terrace of Sans-souci, had descended from its pedestal in order to pay a visit to the dead king.

After a long pause Napoleon's eye resumed its wonted brilliancy. He pointed with a strange smile at the dust covering the lid of the coffin. "Dust without and dust within! that within was a great king and a hero; yet that without is more lasting than the oaths which the Emperor Alexander swore here a year ago, with Frederick William and the beautiful Louisa. Even the kiss which Alexander imprinted at that time on the coffin of Frederick is no longer visible; dust has covered it, and equalized every thing." Thus speaking, he drew lines with his hand; without knowing it, perhaps, his finger traced a large *N* in the dust of the royal coffin. He then hastily left the dark vault to return to the palace.*

The emperor paced the room a long while, his hands clasped on his back; he then rang the bell impetuously, and sent for the chief of his cabinet, M. de Menneval.

"Be seated," said he, as soon as that functionary made his appearance; "take my pen, I will dictate to you my eighteenth bulletin." †

M. de Menneval sat down at the desk. Napoleon walked slowly up and down, and dictated in a loud, stern voice as follows: "The emperor arrived in Potsdam on the 25th of October, and took up his residence at the royal palace. He visited on the first day Sans-souci and the environs of Potsdam, spending some time in the rooms of Frederick II., where every thing is still in the same condition as at the time of his death. In the arsenal at Berlin, five hundred cannon, several hundred thousand pounds of powder, and several thousand muskets, were found in excellent condition. It has been noticed as a singular coincidence that the emperor arrived in Potsdam on the same day and at the same hour, and occupied the same rooms, as the Emperor of Russia during the latter's visit—a visit last year which has had such fatal consequences for Prussia. Since that moment the queen has forgotten to take care of her domestic affairs, and of the most important duties of the toilet, in order to occupy herself with politics, gain power over the king, and spread everywhere the evil influence which possesses her. The result of that famous oath which was taken on the 4th of November, 1805, is the battle of Austerlitz, and the speedy evacuation of Germany by the Russian army in the manner prescribed by France. Forty-eight hours afterward that oath at the coffin of Frederick the Great was made the subject of a copper-plate, which is to be found in all the shops, and even causes the peasants to laugh. On it is repre-

following words: "The clock which always awakened me in the morning; it belonged to Frederick II., and I appropriated it in Potsdam." The bell he also bequeathed to his son. Many conflicting statements have been made concerning the sword Napoleon took. It was certainly not the sword which Frederick had worn to the last. The latter had a leathern scabbard which, in several defective places, had been repaired with sealing-wax, because Frederick found this to be less expensive than to have it repaired by a harness-maker. The king had taken this sword along, when, in September, 1806, he repaired with the queen to the headquarters of the army; it accompanied him during his flight, and was safely brought back by him. It was afterward at the "*Kunstkammer*" in Berlin. The sword which Napoleon sent to Paris had been presented to Frederick by Peter III. of Russia, who, it is well known, was an ardent admirer of the great king. Blücher, in 1814, brought it back from Paris.

* One of Horace Vernet's most beautiful paintings represents this visit of Napoleon paid to the grave of Frederick the Great.

† Napoleon wrote or dictated all his bulletins without consulting any one with regard to them. After being dictated, the bulletins were, however, submitted to Talleyrand, who took good care to make no alteration.

sented the handsome Emperor of Russia; by his side the queen, and opposite him the king, who lifts up his hand over the coffin; the queen, wrapped in a shawl, like lady Hamilton, as seen on the London copper-plates, places her hand on her heart, and seems to look at the Emperor of Russia. It is incomprehensible how the Berlin police could permit the circulation of so base a satire. At all events, the shade of Frederick cannot have contemplated this scandalous scene but with indignation and disgust. His mind, his genius, his wishes, belong to the French nation, which he esteemed so highly, and of which he said that, if he were its king, no cannon should be discharged in Europe without his permission. On his return from Sans-souci the emperor visited also the tomb of Frederick the Great. The remains of this great man are reposing in a wooden coffin, covered with one of copper, and in a vault devoid of drapery, trophies, or any thing that might remind the beholder of his heroic deeds. The emperor has presented the *Hôtel des Invalides* at Paris with the sword of Frederick, with his insignia of the order of the Black Eagle, as well as with the stands of colors used by the king's lifeguards in the Seven Years' War. The veterans will receive with reverent awe every thing that belonged to one of the greatest generals known in history." *

CHAPTER X.

NAPOLEON'S ENTRY INTO BERLIN.

The city of Berlin had not exhibited for many years so festive and lively a spectacle as on the morning of the 27th of October. An immense crowd was moving across the Palace Place, Broad Street, and the Linden, toward the Brandenburg Gate, and forming in line on both sides of the street. Thousands of boys and youths climbed the linden-trees, that stand in two rows in the middle of this thoroughfare, causing the trees to move to and fro under their heavy burden, and gazed with eyes full of curiosity from their lofty position on the bustle reigning beneath. Through the crowd hundreds of busy figures were gliding, standing still here and there, and addressing the people in low and impressive tones; now and then, however, they did not content themselves with mere words, but to some handed pieces of money, and whispered, "Drink the emperor's health, in order that your throats may be prepared, when he makes his entry, to shout in stentorian tones, '*Vive l'Empereur!*'"

These liberal adherents of Napoleon were agents of the French police, already fully organized in Berlin—the hirelings of General Clarke, who was now governor of the capital, and treated the subjugated inhabitants with all the haughtiness and scorn of a triumphant conqueror.

Many tears were shed in the city during these days—many imprecations uttered, but only secretly and in a low voice, for the people could not venture to provoke the anger of the victor, but had to bear whatever burdens he imposed on them. The odds were too heavy; the army was defeated; the king with his court had fled; the higher functionaries had either concealed themselves or loudly declared their willingness to take the oath of allegiance to the Emperor of the French, and to serve him as their master.

What remained, therefore, for the poor inhabitants of Berlin but to submit? All had deserted them; even the governor had escaped, and his lieutenant, the Prince von Hatzfeld, seemed to have no other task than to admonish them to be quiet and obedient, and to implore them to undertake, utter, and even think nothing that might be distasteful to the new French government; but to bow willingly and cheerfully to every thing that the conqueror might demand.

The citizens, therefore, had bowed to their fate; they had submitted silently, and now hastened to the Linden and the Brandenburg Gate to witness the entry of the emperor. Not only the citizens and the people generally desired to witness this entry—the higher classes, and even the ladies, were anxious to do so. Every one felt that a great historical event was to transpire, and eagerly desired to behold the celebrated man who was hated and admired at the same time; who was cursed as an enemy, and yet glorified on account of his heroic deeds. The streets and trees were filled with spectators; and the windows of the splendid buildings, from the ground-floor up to the attic, were crowded, and even the roofs had been opened here and there for the purpose of obtaining more room.

The Linden exhibited a most imposing and brilliant spectacle; still it seemed as though the crowd were to celebrate a funeral pageant, and as though they had come as mourners for such an occasion. Nowhere joyous faces were to be seen—nowhere were heard outbursts of mirth, or those gay, amusing remarks with which the populace of Berlin seldom fail to season a festival. The faces of the people were grave and gloomy;

* Goujon, "Collection des Bulletins de Napoléon," vol. xvii., Bulletin xvii.

and the ladies, standing at the open windows, were not festively adorned, but wore black dresses, and black veils fell from their heads.

Suddenly the bells on all the steeples commenced ringing, and the booming of artillery announced to the spectators, who had patiently awaited this moment from eleven o'clock in the morning till four in the afternoon, that the emperor was approaching the Brandenburg Gate from Charlottenburg. The thousands assembled maintained a breathless silence; even the trees did not move, for the restless boys who had climbed them seemed petrified with astonishment at the extraordinary spectacle. The men, who were now entering the gate, were not such soldiers as the people of Berlin had hitherto been accustomed to see. They were not fine-looking, neat young men in handsome uniforms, with bright leather belts, stiff cravats, and well-powdered pigtails, but soldiers of strange and truly marvellous appearance. Their complexion was dark-brown, and their eyes flashing as dagger-points. Instead of wigs and pigtails, they wore gaudily-colored turbans; instead of close-fitting uniforms, wide red trowsers and dark jackets, richly embroidered with gold; curved sabres were hanging at their sides, and their small, vigorous, and agile forms harmonized perfectly with their splendid Arabian steeds, on which these sons of the desert, the emperor's Mamelukes, were mounted.

Behind them came another corps. It consisted of tall, broad-shouldered men, looking as formidable as Cyclops, with bearded, bronzed faces; their heads covered with high bearskin caps; their breasts veiled by large leather aprons, reaching down to their knees; on their shoulders enormous hatchets, flashing in the sun like burnished silver. And behind these sappers came the famous grenadiers of the guard, infantry as well as cavalry; next, the riflemen of Vincennes, in their green uniforms; and, finally, the bands playing merry airs. The drum-major hurled his enormous cane with its large silver head into the air, and the soul-stirring notes of the "Marseillaise" resounded through the spacious street. Hitherto nobody in Berlin had been permitted to play or sing this forbidden melody, with which France had formerly accompanied her bloodiest orgies; only secretly and softly had the people hummed it into each other's ears; the most stringent orders, issued by the police, had banished it from the concert-halls as well as from the streets. The emperor, perhaps, was aware of this, and it was probably for this reason that he had ordered it to be played; or, perhaps, the son of the revolution, on making his entry into the capital of a "king by the grace of God," wished to remind the people, by this hymn of the terrorists, that it was unnecessary to be born under a royal canopy in order to wear a crown and to be the anointed of the Lord.

But no one listened to this proscribed and fearful melody. All the thousands in the streets, on the trees, at the windows, and on the roofs, were paralyzed with amazement, and looked wonderingly at the new order of things. They who had hitherto seen and known only proud officers, mounted on horseback, staring at every citizen with supercilious glances, and chastising their men for every trifle—they who had always received the impression that army officers were exalted personages, to whom they had to bow, who never ought to walk on foot, or carry any burden whatever—now saw before them the officers of the imperial guard differing but slightly from the privates, and not only on foot, like them, but carrying heavy knapsacks on their backs; and, what caused still greater astonishment, here and there kindly chatting with their men during the march.

But suddenly there arose a tremendous commotion between the pillars of the Brandenburg Gate, and the host of marshals and generals, resembling a star-spangled avalanche, entered the city. Nothing was to be seen but golden epaulettes, orders glittering with diamonds, embroidered uniforms, and long white ostrich-plumes. Not on them, however, were the eyes of the crowd fixed; they gazed only at that grave, pale man, who rode by himself at the head of the dazzling suite. He wore no orders, no golden epaulettes, no ostrich-plumes. Plain and unpretending was his green uniform with its white facings; unadorned was his small three-cornered hat. He sat carelessly and proudly on his magnificent charger, which, prancing and rearing, seemed to greet the crowd. The rider's features were as immovable as if made of stone; his eyes occasionally, however, bent a piercing glance on the multitude, and then gazed again into vacancy—the living emperor was transformed once more into one of the marble triumphators of ancient Roman history. He acknowleged, in a cold and indifferent manner only, the constantly-repeated shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" with which the boys in the trees, the hired men in the street, and the agents of the police, saluted him at every step. To him these cries seemed to be the usual and indispensable musical accompaniment to the step of his horse; he did not take notice of it when he heard it in his progress; he missed it only when it did not rend the air.

The emperor rode on, moody, quiet, and cold; but scrutinizing and vivid were the glances which

the marshals and the rest of his suite cast in all directions. They seemed to be anxious to observe the inhabitants, and to greet the lovely women who were adorning the windows of the houses like garlands of flowers. But those beautiful women did not return their salutations, and the victorious generals saw what they had rarely seen—that the ladies did not accept their homage—that they looked down on them with grave, mournful mien—nay, that most of those charming faces were bathed in tears, not such as well from joy, but from grief and anger.

Napoleon had taken as little notice of the jubilant cheers of the crowd as of the tears of the ladies. He rode on, absorbed in his reflections, toward the royal palace. The bells of the cathedral—in the lower vaults of which the remains of the royal family were reposing; in the upper halls of which the solemn wedding ceremonies of the kings and princes and princesses of Prussia had always been celebrated—greeted with joyous notes the triumphant enemy, and the doors of the palace opened to him. In the brilliant halls in which formerly the submissive vassals and functionaries of the king had done homage to their sovereign, were now assembled the same persons, as well as the officers and cavaliers of the court, to receive the French emperor as their sovereign and master. There were in those halls seven ministers of the king, the members of the municipality of Berlin, with the two burgomasters; the high dignitaries of the clergy of both confessions, and the officers of the different tribunals; the members of the royal household, headed by the king's master of ceremonies, Count von Neale. And all these gentlemen had come to present their respects to the man who had routed their army, driven their king and queen from the capital, and transformed their city into a French prefecture.

The broad folding-doors opened, and the grand marshal walked through the halls, crying in a ringing voice, "His majesty the emperor!" A profound and solemn silence ensued. The eyes of all were turned toward the door by which the emperor was to enter. He appeared on the threshold, as impassive as ever. But the silence continued; the shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" which had greeted Napoleon in the streets, had not penetrated within the white hall, where the statues of the Hohenzollerns were standing. But this silent greeting, which might seem too much to the ancestors of the king, did not satisfy the little soul of the proud conqueror. The grand marshal approached to introduce the master of ceremonies, Count von Neale, and to inquire whether the latter would be allowed to present the several dignitaries to his majesty.

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, "you are the Count von Neale, whose daughter is so enthusiastic and warlike an Amazon.* The women of Berlin, headed by your queen, were bent upon having war; behold the result! You ought to keep your family in bounds, sir; you ought not to permit your children to indulge in such senseless military tirades. Assuredly, I do not want war—not that I am distrustful of my own strength, but because the blood of my subjects is too precious to me, and because it is my first duty to shed it only for their honor and security. The population of Berlin is only a victim of the war, while the instigators of the hostilities between France and Prussia have escaped. But I will humiliate and impoverish the court-aristocracy, who dared to oppose me, and make them beg their bread in foreign lands."

The Count von Neale, pale and trembling, stammered a few unintelligible words and intended to withdraw, withered and crushed by the emperor's anger. But the searching eyes of Napoleon were firmly and steadfastly fixed on him, and, as if guessing his innermost thoughts, he said, in a cold, disdainful voice, "Remain and do your duty!" The Count von Neale, therefore, was obliged to stay; he had to introduce to the emperor the officials and dignitaries, after the chancellor had previously presented to him the seven ministers of Prussia.

The persons ordered to appear at this audience had formed in line on both sides of the white hall, and the emperor walked slowly across the wide apartment, while the Count von Neale, who was immediately behind him, announced in a loud voice the names and positions of those standing in the first line.

"Sire," he said, pointing to two gentlemen, adorned with costly golden chains, standing in front of the line, "sire, the two burgomasters and the members of the municipality of Berlin."

"I know these gentlemen," said Napoleon, and his face assumed a milder air. "Both of you belonged to the deputation that wished to present to me at Potsdam the keys of Berlin. You assured me at that time that the rumors which had been circulated with regard to this city were entirely unfounded; that the citizens and the mass of the people had been opposed to the war, and

* The French police had captured, a few days previous to the commencement of the war, a letter, written by the young Countess von Neale, containing the following passage: "Napoleon does not want war; he must be compelled to wage it." Napoleon had read this letter.

that there was not one sensible man who had not clearly foreseen the dangers threatening the country. I have now seen at my entry that you were right; the good people of this city are not to blame for this war, and only a handful of old women and young officers brought about this mischief. The visit of the Emperor Alexander is the cause of the events which have proved so disastrous to Prussia; and next, the change which that visit produced in the feelings of the queen, who, from a timid and modest lady, was quickly transformed into a restless and warlike Amazon. She suddenly insisted on having a regiment of her own, and on being present at the meetings of the council of state; she directed the affairs of the government so skilfully as to bring it in a few days to the verge of ruin. I shall assuredly know how to distinguish those who instigated the war from those who tried to avoid it. I shall chastise the former and reward the latter. Had your king not been so weak—had he not allowed himself to be led by a faction which, oblivious of the true welfare of the state and of the sovereign, did their best to exasperate him against me, he would not be where he is. But my enemies endeavored to intimidate him, and managed to frighten him by all sorts of demonstrations. You, gentlemen of the municipality, ought to have taken steps to inform the king correctly of the opposition of the citizens of Berlin to a war with France. You will take care now to preserve good order in the capital."

"Sire," ventured the first burgomaster, in a timid and humble voice, "your majesty has seen to-day, from the enthusiasm of the citizens, what spirit is animating them."

The emperor bent a rapid, inquiring glance on him, and seemed not to have heard his words. "As a matter of course," said Napoleon, in a loud and angry voice, "no more windows must be broken by the mob! You have to see to it that such brutalities do not occur again. My brother the King of Prussia ceased to be king on the day when he did not cause Prince Louis Ferdinand to be hung for instigating the mob to break the windows of his ministers."

Napoleon walked on without giving time to the burgomaster for a reply or justification; and when the Count von Neale presented to him the members of the tribunals, his brow was serene, and his face assumed the gentle, winning air which always exercised so irresistible an influence on those on whom the sunshine of his imperial kindness shed its rays.

The emperor conversed with these gentlemen about the peculiarities of the administration of justice in Prussia, and listened to their replies and explanations with polite attention.

"Your administration of justice seems to contain many excellent features," said he, musingly. "Your laws have a splendid foundation of equality, and cannot be arbitrarily perverted and abused to shield wrong and injustice. I am astonished that, with this code of Frederick II. in your hand, you were not able to render harmless and silence forever all those seditious and revolutionary spirits that recently infested Berlin, and now have made Prussia so unhappy. But, instead of suppressing this agitation in time, you looked on idly, while miserable scribblers and journalists, influenced by women, constantly added fuel to the fire. I have been told of a contemptible journal in this city which is said to have preached war against France with a rabid fanaticism. You ought to have silenced the madman who edited it. Why did not you do so?"

"Sire, the laws of our country do not permit us to suppress the free expression of opinion, and the discussion of public affairs. So long as the periodicals, newspapers, and other publications, do not attack the existing laws, or incite the people to riots, high-treason, or sedition, we are not allowed to interfere with them. Every citizen has the right to utter his opinion publicly and frankly, provided he does so in a decent and lawful manner."

"That is to say, you have a free press," exclaimed Napoleon, "and grant to every outsider the right of speaking of things, about which he does not know any thing. With a free press, no monarchy can be maintained, especially in times of danger and convulsions. You see whither your so-called free discussion of public affairs has carried you! Your journalists preached war, and nothing but war; they irritated the people, and made the king believe that they were the organs of public opinion, while, in fact, they were but the echoes of the officers of the guard, and of the foolish women who were bent on having war. Your queen has used the newspapers as a weapon to exasperate and excite her husband. Like Marie Antoinette of France, and Marie Caroline of Naples, Louisa of Prussia has become the evil genius of her country. The Turks are perfectly right in keeping their women imprisoned. It is the best that can be done." He nodded to the gentlemen, and, passing on, allowed the Count von Neale to present to him the dignitaries of the Church.

"The members of the clergy, I believe, ought to be content with me," said Napoleon, with a smile, which embellished his features as with a

sunshine of grace and sweetness. "It was I who restored the Church in France; hence, I need not tell you how important and indispensable I believe religion and the Church to be for the welfare of nations. Great tasks and great duties are intrusted to the hands of the clergy. Endeavor to fulfil them faithfully, gentlemen. Above all, avoid meddling with politics. Pay exclusive attention to your own affairs, and do as the gospel commands you: 'Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's.'"

He turned toward Mr. Erman, counsellor of the supreme consistorial court, and dean of the French congregation, and cast a piercing glance on the venerable, white-haired clergyman.

"You, above all, sir, should not forget those words," said Napoleon, in a loud voice. "For you are a Frenchman, and it is your duty, therefore, wherever you may be, to educate faithful and devoted subjects to your country. You might have done a great deal of good in this city by your commanding talents and eloquence. You ought to have opened the eyes of the population as to their true interests and the misery that necessarily would be entailed on them by a war against France. You failed to do so; you were silent while the fanatical war-faction was clamoring; and while the reckless pranks of the officers of the guard were intimidating good and sagacious patriots. I know very well that you are not to be blamed for those excesses, but you ought to have tried to prevent them. I know the faction whose fanaticism against France has done so much mischief. I know that the queen was at the head of it. As Marie Antoinette once gained over to her side the lifeguards at that celebrated banquet, Louisa did the same with the officers of the Prussian guard. She is, therefore, responsible for the savage war-cries and the crazy arrogance of the officers. This woman, who has become as fatal to her people as was Helen to the Trojans—this woman is the only cause of the disasters of Prussia!"

His voice rolled like thunder through the hall; his eyes flashed fire, and all the beholders, seized with dismay, turned pale and cast down their eyes. Only old Counsellor Erman's face betrayed no fear or anxiety. He looked at the emperor with a grave and almost angry air, and his voice interrupted the ominous stillness which had followed Napoleon's words.

"Sire," he said, loud enough to be heard by every one, "your majesty says that the queen is the only cause of the disasters of Prussia—that she brought about the war, and excited and instigated the evil passions of the reckless! Sire, that is not true! The queen is as generous as she is virtuous!"

The assembly felt as if thrilled by an electric shock—all fixed their eyes timidly and anxiously on Napoleon—every one held his breath to hear his reply, and felt already in advance the most profound compassion for the unhappy old man who would be crushed with the victor's wrath. But the emperor was silent. Only for a moment his eyes flashed—and his glances seemed to pierce through the old man. Napoleon said nothing. He seemed not to have heard Erman's words, but turned with perfect composure toward the Catholic clergy, to converse with them about the interests of their Church. He appeared, however, wearied; passed in a more hurried manner to the rest who were introduced to him, and evidently hastened to finish the audience. He then greeted the assembly with a nod and left the hall, followed by the grand marshal and his two chamberlains.

For an instant all remained immovable. Every one felt as if a brilliant meteor had flitted past him, and as if his vision were too much dazzled to be able to see any thing else. Then, however, all turned their eyes once more to Erman, who stood at his place, calm and smiling, and looked almost compassionately at those who had hitherto called themselves his friends, but were not courageous enough now to approach him, and avoided meeting his glances. He then quietly turned, and, followed by the other clergymen, walked toward the door. But those who had stood before him had also commenced leaving the hall, and in consequence the passage was crowded. Erman suddenly saw himself in the midst of the throng, that slowly moved onward, but it was apparently no mere accident that the crowd was densest around him. Some hastily seized his hand; others whispered to him: "Flee! conceal yourself!" Others again gazed at him with eyes full of tenderness and emotion, and murmured: "We thank you in the name of all the faithful!" But constantly the low words of "Flee! conceal yourself!" were repeated. But the venerable man looked with a calm, proud smile at those who surrounded him, and said in a loud and firm voice, "I will not flee! I will not conceal myself!"

Just at the moment when Erman, followed by his timid friends and secret admirers, was about to cross the threshold, a loud voice was heard to exclaim, "Counsellor Erman!"

"Here I am," he replied, turning around, as well as all the rest.

A low murmur of horror pervaded the assembly; their faces turned pale, and their brows were clouded. The moment so much feared had ap-

parently come—Erman could not escape, or conceal himself; for he who had called out his name was none other than Duroc, the emperor's grand marshal, who had evidently been sent by his master. Those who hitherto had been so anxious to leave the hall, and thronged so eagerly round the courageous old man, now stood still, and the grand marshal walked through the opened ranks directly toward him. Every one seemed to hold his breath to listen, and even to stop the pulsations of his heart, to hear the order for Erman's arrest.

The grand marshal now stood before Erman, who had seen him coming, and advanced a step to meet him. Duroc bowed, and said in a loud voice, "His majesty the emperor has ordered me to invite Counsellor Erman, of the supreme consistorial court, to dine with him to-morrow at noon. His majesty desires me to tell you that he is anxious to make the acquaintance of a man who is so faithful and courageous a servant of the royal family, and endowed with sufficient magnanimity and boldness to defend the absent and accused. His majesty has instructed me to assure you that, far from disapproving your conduct, he highly esteems and admires it, for the emperor knows how to appreciate every thing that is high-minded and noble."

CHAPTER XI.

NAPOLEON AND TALLEYRAND.

NAPOLEON was rapidly pacing his cabinet. His face was pale and gloomy; his lips firmly compressed, as they always were when he was angry, and his eyes flashed with rage. He held two papers in his hand: one of them was in writing, the other contained printed matter; and, whenever his eyes glanced at them, he clinched his small hand, adorned with diamonds, and crumpled the papers.

The emperor's anger, which filled with trembling and dismay every one who had to approach him in such moments, had no effect, however, on the man who stood in the middle of the room supporting one of his hands on the table covered with maps and papers, and with the other playing with the lace frill protruding from his velvet waistcoat. His small, twinkling eyes followed calmly and coldly every motion Napoleon made. Whenever his anger seemed to increase, a scarcely perceptible, contemptuous smile played on the lips of this man, and a flash of hatred, and, withal, of scorn burst from his eyes. But this never lasted longer than a moment; his pale and sickly face immediately resumed its impenetrable aspect, and the smile of a polite courtier reappeared on his lips. This was Talleyrand, first minister of the emperor—Talleyrand, who had originally served the Church as a priest, then the republic as a minister—who had deserted and betrayed both to become minister of the empire, and to combat and deny all the principles he had formerly advocated and declared to be necessary for the welfare of France.

"Talleyrand," exclaimed Napoleon, in an angry voice, standing still in front of the minister, "I will set a rigorous example. I will trample upon this haughty Prussian aristocracy that still dares to brave me—I will let it feel the consequences of continued opposition to me! What audacity it was for this Prince von Hatzfeld, while I was approaching with my army, and already master of Prussia, to continue sending information to his fleeing king and to the ministers, and to play the spy! Ah, I am going to prove to him that his rank will not protect him from being punished according to his deserts, and that I have traitors and spies tried and sentenced by a court-martial, whether they be of the common people or the high-born. Both of us have seen times when the heads of the nobility were knocked off like poppies from the stalks; and we will remind this aristocracy, which relies so confidently on its ancient privileges, of the fact that such times may come for Prussia too, unless those high-born gentlemen desist from their arrogant conduct, and submit to me humbly and obediently. Cause the Prince von Hatzfeld to be arrested immediately; order a court-martial to meet within twenty-four hours, to try the traitor and spy. This letter will be proof sufficient; nothing further is necessary to pass sentence of death upon him."

"And will your majesty really carry out the sentence?" asked Talleyrand, in his soft, insinuating voice, and with his polite smile.

Napoleon flashed one of his fiery glances at him. "Why do you put that question to me?" he said, harshly.

"Sire, because I believe excessive rigor might not accomplish the desired purpose. Instead of humiliating and prostrating the aristocracy, it might bring about the reverse, and incite them to sedition and insurrection. Sometimes leniency does more good than severity, and, at all events, in applying either, the character of the nations to be subdued ought to be consulted. The Italians are easily restrained by severe measures, for they are, on the whole, cowardly and enervated; and, when the straw-fire of their first impetuosity has

gone out, they feel enthusiastic admiration for him who has placed his foot on their neck, and is crushing them. But the Germans are a more tenacious and phlegmatic nation. They resemble the white bulls I have seen in Italy, who fulfil with proud composure their daily task. When the driver urges them but a little with the iron point of the stick, they work more actively and obediently; but when he wounds too deeply, their phlegm disappears, and they rush in fury against him who has irritated them too much."

"And you believe that the German white bull is already irritated?" asked Napoleon, morosely.

"Yes, sire! It is time to appease him, if he is not to grow savage and furious. The execution of Palm has stirred up a good deal of ill feeling, and it would be prudent to counteract it as much as possible. Your majesty may menace and frighten the supercilious and arrogant aristocracy of Prussia; but when they are trembling and terrified, then exercise clemency and forbearance, which is the best way of subduing the refractory."

The emperor made no reply, but crossed the room repeatedly. He then stood still once more closely in front of Talleyrand, and looked him full in the face.

"I hold to my decision," he said coldly. "I must have the Prince von Hatzfeld immediately arrested, and the court-martial must meet within twenty-four hours for the purpose of trying him as a traitor and spy." He stepped to his desk, and hastily wrote a few words on a piece of paper. He himself, having folded, sealed, and directed it, rang the bell. "Take this," he said to the officer who had entered the room. "Send immediately an orderly with this letter to Governor Clarke. He must have it in five minutes."

When the officer had withdrawn, Napoleon turned once more toward Talleyrand. "Let no one dare talk to me about mercy," he said, "for I shall grant it to no one—neither to you, nor to the prince's wife, of whose beauty Duroc once informed me. If the Germans resemble the Italian bulls, I will break off their horns, and extract their teeth—then they will be powerless. Not a word, therefore, about mercy, either for the aristocracy, or for the journalists. These miserable scribblers must be made to tremble, and lay their pens aside. What language that miserable writer has dared to use against me in this paper—what sarcasms and sneers he has taken the liberty of uttering against me! And the King of Prussia did not have him arrested! this weak-headed government permitted the libeller quietly to pursue his infamous course!"

"Sire, the editor of this paper, called *The Telegraph*, I am told was one of the intimate friends and followers of Prince Louis Ferdinand."

"And, consequently, also one of the friends of the queen!" added Napoleon, quickly. "That woman has disdained no expedient to wage war against me; she hates me intensely, and with more energy than her feeble husband. I will pay her for this hatred, and she shall feel what it is to provoke my anger. Yes, I will humiliate her. She may now, perhaps, repent with tears what she has done. She is already a fugitive. I will drive her into the remotest corner of her country, and compel this proud queen to bow before me in the dust, and beg me on her knees for mercy! But I will not have mercy upon her; I will be inexorable! My anger shall crush her and her house, as it has crushed whosoever dared oppose me. Woe unto those who have been her willing tools; they shall atone for having served her hatred against me!—Is any thing known about the fellow who edited this paper, and wrote these wretched articles?"

"Sire, the editor is a certain Professor Lange, one of the most zealous royalists, and especially an ardent admirer of the queen."

"Then he has fled with her, I suppose, and she will instigate him on the way to pen new slanders, which, by virtue of the licentiousness of the press, he will utter against me?"

"No, sire, he has not fled, but kept himself concealed here; our police, however, ferreted out his whereabouts and arrested him. It remains for your majesty to decree what is to be done with him."

"He shall be a warning example to the German scribblers, and remind them of the penalty incurred by those who stir up resistance against me by their insults and sneers. I will silence these libellers once for all, and destroy their contemptible free press by the executioner's axe. The punishment inflicted upon Palm seemed not sufficient—let M. Lange, then, be another warning to them. Let him die as Palm died!"

"Your majesty, then, will give to the sentimental Germans another martyr, to whom they will pray, and whose death will increase their enthusiasm? Sire, martyrs are like fools. 'One fool makes many others,' and thus we might say also, 'One martyr makes many others.' Suppose you have this M. Lange shot to-day, because he is a faithful adherent of the queen, and has written in accordance with her views—to-morrow pamphleteers will spring up like mushrooms—there will be more libels against your majesty, written by those having a vain desire of dying for their

beautiful queen, and in the hope that she would shed tears for them, as she did for M. Lange."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, scornfully, "you are strangely inclined to mercy and reconciliation to-day. It seems a sickly fever of leniency has seized you. Then you think I ought to pardon this miserable pamphleteer instead of punishing him?"

"Sire, I believe this fellow will be much more severely punished if we do not make him a martyr, but only use him as a tool as long as it suits us. As this Professor Lange is so well versed in writing pamphlets, and sending libellous articles into the world, let him continue his trade; only let him be ordered to point his weapons against the queen, instead of your majesty, and to revile her as zealously as he reviled you."

"And do you believe he will stoop so low as to eat his own words, and to convict himself of lying? I was told he had hitherto glorified Louisa of Prussia, and abused me, with an almost frantic enthusiasm."

"Sire, let us threaten him with death—let us offer him money. He will succumb to fear and avarice. I know these journalists. They are cowardly, and always in pecuniary trouble. Lange will turn his poisoned arrows against the queen, and the admirer will become her accuser."

Napoleon, frowning, looked musingly at the floor. "What a miserable race these men are!" he muttered. "One must devour them in order not be devoured by them. Well, then," he added, in a loud voice, "you may try it. Let us turn the weapons which the fanatical queen has sharpened against us, against herself. But the accusations must be grave and well-founded. The eyes of this foolish nation must be opened. We must show to it that this woman, whom it worships as a chaste Lucretia, as a beautiful saint, is nothing but a very pretty lady with a well-developed form, endowed with little mind, but much coquetry, and who, so far from being a saint, has a very human heart, and has had many an adventure. If M. Lange is willing to write in this strain, I will pardon him.* Tragedy must be sometimes transformed into a farce, that the stupid people may laugh at what they were originally inclined to weep for. Ah, that Queen of Prussia was bent upon waging war against me! She shall have it. We will wage war against each other; let it be a mortal combat. Did the Prussian ambassador accept our terms?"

"Sire, he was undecided yesterday; but he will not be to-day."

"Why not?"

"Sire, a courier has just arrived, and I came to communicate to your majesty the news. He is from Stettin, and informed me that that fortress has capitulated. Our hussars took possession of it."

The emperor smiled. "Well," he said, "when hussars take fortresses, new military tactics will have to be invented, and the walls of fortresses might just as well be razed. But you are right. The fall of Stettin is a most important event, and the government will have to make up its mind to accept our terms. We ought not, however, to accelerate the peace negotiations too much. The terms which we have offered to Prussia are tolerably favorable; if more couriers of this description should arrive, we ought to render the terms more onerous, and the peace more humiliating. Try to delay the definite settlement with the Prussian ambassador; it is not necessary for us to sign the treaty so soon. Let us await further news."

Just then the door opened, and the *valet de chambre* appeared, announcing a courier just arrived, who desired to deliver to his majesty dispatches from the Grand-duke of Berg. Napoleon made a sign to him. The door opened, and the courier, in his dusty and bespattered travelling-costume, entered the room.

"Where is the grand-duke?" asked the emperor, quickly.

"Sire, in Prenzlau."

"Ah, in Prenzlau!" exclaimed Napoleon. "The gates have opened to him, then! Give me your dispatches, and then go and take rest. I see you stand in need of it!"

"Sire, I have been ten hours on horseback, and have just dismounted."

"Breakfast shall be served you. Apply for it to the *valet de chambre* in the anteroom. Go!"

The courier had not yet closed the door of the cabinet after him, when Napoleon opened the dispatches, and rapidly glanced over their contents. With a proud, triumphant smile he turned toward Talleyrand. "I was right in saying that we ought to delay the definite conclusion of peace," he said; "we shall now be able to impose more onerous conditions on Prussia, and she will have

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* Talleyrand's prediction was fulfilled. Threats of capital punishment, and promises of ample rewards, transformed the editor of the *Telegraph* into as enthusiastic an admirer of Napoleon as he had formerly been of Queen Louisa; and, after having hitherto written nothing but fulsome eulogies, he now did not shrink from publishing the most shameless libels against her. The immediate consequence was, that the *Telegraph* lost in a single day most of its subscribers. But Lange continued publishing slanderous articles against Louisa, for the French government paid him for it.

to submit to them. The Grand-duke of Berg has sent me excellent news. The corps of the Prince von Hohenlohe has capitulated near Prenzlau. The Prussian army exists no more. Ten thousand men, with three hundred and twenty-five officers, about two thousand horses, and fifty-four field-pieces, have been captured by our forces. Ten thousand men! Now, if ever I should live to see the disgrace of such a surrender of any of my own corps, I would make peace with the enemy for the sole purpose of recovering my captured troops, and of having the miserable officers shot who entered into such a capitulation. Ten thousand men, and three hundred officers! Truly, my brother the King of Prussia is unlucky, and I am sure the beautiful queen will bitterly repent of her hatred against me."

"Sire," said Talleyrand, with a malicious smile, "it is said there is but one step from hatred to love. Who knows whether the gods, in order to punish the queen for her audacity, will not cause her to take this step? Who knows whether her intense hatred is not even now but the mask which conceals her love and admiration for your majesty? Beware of approaching this beautiful Helen, lest your own hatred should run the risk of being transformed into love."

"Ah," said Napoleon, angrily, "were my heart capable of such a change, I should tear it with my own hands from my breast in order to smother its desires. Though she were the most beautiful woman in the world, and offered her love to me, I should turn away from her, and hurl my contempt and hatred into her face. She has offended me too grievously, for it is she who has destroyed all my plans, and instigated her husband to assume a hostile attitude. France and Prussia are destined to be friends, and a war against Prussia is for France equivalent to chaining her right hand. If Prussia had remained my faithful ally last year, if she had not joined the third coalition, our united armies at that time would have seen not only Germany at our feet, but all Europe. Yet the queen would not have it thus; childish and passionate, like all women, she did not consult her reason, but only her feelings; and, as her haughty heart could not bear the idea of accepting the friendship and alliance of an emperor who had not been born under a royal canopy, she preferred exasperating her husband against me, and plunging Prussia into misery, distress, and disgrace. For this capitulation of Prenzlau is a disgrace, and if I am glad of it as an enemy, because it is advantageous to me, it causes me to blush as a soldier, because it disgraces the whole military profession. Ah, there is justice in Heaven, and a Providence is directing our affairs on earth."

"Ah, your majesty believes in such things?" asked Talleyrand, with a sneer. "You believe there is a God who makes it His business to direct the world and mankind, and to dabble in the trade of princes and diplomatists?"

"As I have not been ordained a priest like you, and never have served the Church, I may be allowed to believe in God," said Napoleon, smiling. "Yes, I believe in Providence, and I believe it was a dispensation of Providence that those arrogant officers of the guard, who thought it was only necessary to show themselves in order to drive away the French, and who went so far in their madness as to whet their swords on the doorsteps of the house of our ambassadors, should now be duly humiliated and chastised. For the guards of Potsdam and Berlin are among the captured of the corps of the Prince von Hohenlohe, and they will soon arrive in Berlin. A royal prince also, the brother of Prince Louis Ferdinand, is among the prisoners."

"Your majesty is right," said Talleyrand, "we are able now to impose more rigorous terms on Prussia. If your majesty permit, I will immediately enter into negotiations concerning this point with M. de Lucchesini. He is at present awaiting me."

"Inform him of the latest news; that will render him submissive. You know my intentions, and know, too, what I expect Prussia to do. The king offered Baireuth to me instead of the contribution of one hundred million francs which I had asked for. Such a substitution is out of the question now. Besides, we shall add the following conditions: Prussia, in case Russia declares war against Turkey, will ally herself with France, and march her whole army against the emperor of Russia."

"Ah, sire, you are bent, then, on breaking the heart of the beautiful Louisa?" asked Talleyrand, laughing cynically.

"It is my reply to the oath she and her husband took with Alexander at the grave of Frederick II. Go, and inform Lucchesini of the latest news and of my conditions."

"Your majesty promised to be so gracious as to receive this forenoon the ambassadors of the petty German princes, who have been begging for an audience since yesterday morning."

"It will not by any means hurt these petty dignitaries to practise a little the virtue of patience," said Napoleon, harshly. "I shall admit them tomorrow, in order to get rid at length of their complaints. Do you still remember that I in-

structed you several months since to draw up the necessary reports for the formation of a new state in Northern Germany, between the Rhine and the Elbe?"

"Sire, I carried out your order at that time, and delivered to you the report concerning this state."

"Yes, it is in my hands, and it is time for us to carry out my views in regard to it. You drew it up with the pen, and I executed and illustrated it with the sword. Both of us, therefore, have done our duty. To-morrow I will inform the ambassadors of these petty princes of our views as to this new state, in order that they may evacuate their own. Go to Lucchesini. I will take a ride, and pay a visit to my gardens in Charlottenburg."

Talleyrand bowed, and left the cabinet. In the large hall contiguous to it, he saw Grand-marshal Duroc, who was standing at the farthest window. Talleyrand hastened to him as fast as his limping leg would permit, and drew the grand marshal, who had come to meet him, back into the window. "M. Grand marshal," he said, in a low voice, "I am about to turn traitor and to disclose to you a secret of the emperor. My life is in your hands; if you should inform his majesty of what I am about to do, I must perish. Will you do so?"

Duroc smiled. "Your excellency," he said, "I am a good patriot, and as I know how indispensable your life is to the welfare and happiness of France, I shall take care not to undertake any thing against you; I should, on the contrary, always deem it incumbent upon me to protect the life of your excellency, and to attend to your welfare whenever an occasion offered. You may, therefore, safely communicate your secret to me. I would die sooner than betray you."

"I thank you," said Talleyrand, bowing. "Listen, then; the emperor has issued orders to arrest the Prince von Hatzfeld, and to have him tried by a court-martial."

"Impossible!" ejaculated Duroc, turning pale. "The Prince von Hatzfeld has always been a zealous and warm adherent of France, and it was precisely on account of this that he was in high disfavor with the court party. The inhabitants of Berlin also reproach him with having prevented them from defending themselves, and with having intentionally failed to remove the arms from the arsenal. What, then, may he have done that he should be tried by a French court-martial?"

An imperceptible smile passed over Talleyrand's astute features. "He has written a letter to the king," he said, "which, if need be, *may* be construed as the letter of a traitor and spy, especially since an opportunity is desired to set an example, and to intimidate the haughty aristocracy, because they avoid coming hither and doing homage to the conqueror."

"If that be the intention," sighed Duroc, "the Prince von Hatzfeld is lost. The emperor will be inexorable."

"Is it necessary, then, to have some one put to death in order to frighten the others?" asked Talleyrand. "But you are right. The emperor will have no mercy. The court-martial will assemble to-morrow."

"To-morrow!" said Duroc, sadly. "Oh, into what distress it will plunge the family! The young princess loves her husband passionately; she expects to become a mother in a few months, and is to lose the father of her child before it sees the light!"

Again a smile overspread Talleyrand's face. He inclined closer to the grand marshal and placed his small, emaciated hand on Duroc's vigorous arm. "My friend," he said, in a low voice, "you must try to save the prince!"

"I?" asked Duroc, wonderingly.

Talleyrand nodded. "Yes, you! You have long known the family; you have, on your various missions to Berlin, been repeatedly at Hatzfeld's house, and, as a matter of course, the young princess in her distress and despair will apply to you for advice and assistance. You must procure her an interview with the emperor, and she will thus obtain an opportunity to implore his majesty on her knees to have mercy on her husband. The whole aristocracy, then, in her person will humbly kneel before the emperor, and they will all be pardoned in the person of the prince. My dear sir, you must at all events procure the princess an interview with Napoleon."

"But did you not tell me that the emperor was determined not to pardon the prince, and that the court-martial will assemble to-morrow?"

"I did. I might have added that the emperor, when I begged him to have mercy on Hatzfeld, angrily rejected my application, and told me he would not permit any one to renew it. He was very emphatic about it. Even Duroc, he said, should not dare to conduct the princess to him, and thus enable her to implore his mercy."

"Well?" exclaimed Duroc.

"Well," said Talleyrand, composedly. "I believed I might conclude precisely, from this peremptory order, that he wished to indicate to me that he was inclined to pardon the offender in this manner."

"What!" said Duroc, smiling, "the emperor orders us not to admit the Princess von Hatzfeld; he says he will not pardon the prince, and you conclude from all this that he will grant her an audience and the pardon of her husband?"

"Certainly," said Talleyrand. "What is language given us for, unless to veil our thoughts? Whenever I have to deal with sagacious and prominent men, I presume that their thoughts are just the reverse of what their words express. Only simpletons, and men of no position, say what they mean. Try it, by all means. Procure the princess an interview with the emperor, and leave the rest to her eloquence and beauty."

"But I cannot go to her and offer her my intercession. It would look as though the emperor had sent me; and if he then should pardon the prince, it would be generally believed to be a mere *coup de théâtre*."

"You are right. We must avoid by all means letting the affair assume such a character," said Talleyrand, smiling. "If the princess really loves her husband, and if she really intends to save him, she will naturally first think of you; for you are acquainted with her and her family, and are known to be the emperor's intimate and influential friend. It will be but natural for her to invoke your intercession."

"If she does so, I will try, to the best of my power, to be useful to her, for I have spent many pleasant hours at the prince's house, and it would be agreeable to me to do her a favor. But I am afraid you are mistaken. The emperor never takes back his word, and if he has said that he will have no mercy, and not admit the princess, that will be the end of it, and all endeavors of mine will be in vain."

"Try it at least," said Talleyrand. "Perhaps you may accomplish your purpose. But you have no time to lose, for, as I have told you already, the court-martial is to assemble to-morrow. What is to be done, must be done, therefore, in the course of to-day."

CHAPTER XII.

THE PRINCESS VON HATZFELD.

GRAND-MARSHAL DUROC was pacing his room in great agitation. Evening was drawing nigh, and still he had not received any intelligence from the Princess von Hatzfeld. Yet her husband had been arrested in the course of the forenoon and taken to the palace, in one of the rooms of which he was locked up and kept under strict surveillance. The news of his arrest had spread rapidly through Berlin, and cast a gloom over the whole city. Everywhere in the streets groups of pale and grave men were to be seen, who whispered to each other this latest dreadful event, and vented their anger in secret imprecations.

All were convinced that the Prince von Hatzfeld must die; every one felt it to be a new humiliation inflicted upon himself personally, that one of the most respected and distinguished men in Prussia was to be charged with felony, and tried as a common spy. No one doubted that the court-martial would pass sentence of death upon him; and that Napoleon would show no mercy, nor feel any compassion, could be read in his stern and melancholy air when, followed by his suite, he rode through the streets to Charlottenburg.

All the reproaches heretofore uttered against the Prince von Hatzfeld were forgotten; the people forgave his weakness, his cowardice, his predilection for France. At this hour, when he was menaced by the universal enemy and oppressor they only remembered that he was a German, and that the anger of the conqueror ought to make him a martyr of the German cause. They whispered to each other that Napoleon had selected the prince merely for the purpose of intimidating the opposition by an example of severity, and of frightening the royalists. "He is lost!" they said, mournfully. "The emperor will not pardon him, for he intends to punish in the prince's person ourselves, who love the king and would like to send him information concerning the enemy and his armies."

"The Prince von Hatzfeld is lost!" said Duroc, also, as he was uneasily and sadly pacing his room. "Yes! This time Talleyrand, in spite of all his sagacity, has been mistaken. The emperor does not intend to pardon the prince, for he has selected Davoust, Rapp, and Clarke, as members of the court-martial, and they have no mercy on those whom their master has accused. The princess does not think of coming to me and of invoking my intercession. And even if she did, I should not be able to assist her. All my supplications would be in vain. The emperor has resolved on the prince's death from policy, not in anger; hence nothing can save him."

Just then the door opened, and the footman hastily entered. "Grand marshal," he said, "there is a veiled lady outside, who insists on seeing you. I have vainly requested her to give me her name; she will only mention it to your excellency, and—"

Duroc did not longer listen to him. He himself hastened into the anteroom, and, offering his arm to the lady, conducted her into his cabinet.

"Go down-stairs, Jean," he hurriedly said to his footman—"go down-stairs, hasten into the Palace Place, and when you see the emperor approaching in the distance, return and inform me of it."

Jean slipped out of the door, and Duroc locked it after him. "Well, madame," he then said, "speak! We are alone."

The lady hastily removed the veil from her face, and showed her beautiful, pale features bathed in tears.

"The Princess von Hatzfeld!" exclaimed Duroc, successfully feigning an air of great surprise.

"Yes, it is I," she said, breathlessly and with quivering lips. "I come to beseech you to assist me! You must do so—you must not desert me! My husband has been arrested! He is charged with having secretly informed the king of the operations of the French army. He is accused of being a spy. Oh, merciful Heaven! he will die, for the emperor is bent on having him executed; he desires to crush and ruin us all! Do you understand it is my husband?—he whom others charged with being a traitor to his country, because, in his generous exertions to avoid bloodshed, he always admonished the inhabitants to be patient and submissive—he is charged now with having betrayed the emperor, and is to be executed as a spy! They have dragged him from my side and taken him away. I fainted with grief and despair. Oh, I hoped—I wished it were death that prostrated me! But God would not let me die; He preserved my life, that I might try to save my husband. The physician advised me to remain, and endeavor to take rest. Duroc, how can I take rest while the life of my beloved husband is in danger? I rose from my couch, for the thought flashed through my mind, 'Duroc will assist me in saving him!' And now I am here, and beseech you, have mercy on a wife's despair! Duroc, help me, so that I may save the prince! You have a kind and generous heart, and the emperor loves you! Implore him to have mercy on my husband! By all that is dear to you, I beseech you, beg for him!" And quite beside herself, pale and in tears, the young princess was about to kneel down before Duroc, but he quickly raised her up, and, bowing deeply, kissed her cold, trembling hands.

"I thank you, princess, for having thought of and believed in me," he said. "But I am afraid that your faith will be in vain."

"Pray for my husband," she said, sobbing. "You see, I shall die if I lose him. Have pity on my youth, and on my unborn child! Implore the emperor to have mercy on the prince!"

"You believe the emperor would listen to me?" asked Duroc, sadly. "Then you do not know him; you do not know what he is when he is angry. I have been in more than twenty battles; bullets have hissed all around me; death was at my side, and I did not tremble, but I tremble when the emperor is angry. When I behold his marble face—his flashing eyes—when his voice resounds like the roll of thunder, I comprehend how women faint and men flee. I myself feel then what I never felt in the battle-field—I feel fear!"

"Then you will not assist me!" exclaimed the princess, wringing her hands. "You will not do any thing for him? And yet he is innocent. My noble husband never committed the crime with which he is charged. He is no spy—no traitor—and yet he is to die! I have no friend, and the only man who I had hoped would aid me deserts me, because he is afraid of his master's frown!"

"No," said Duroc, "I do not desert you, I only tell you what the emperor is in his wrath; I only tell you that the tempestuous ocean is pleasant, and the thunder mild, compared with him in such a mood. However, I would gladly expose myself to it if I could be useful to you and to your husband. But it is a vain hope. The emperor would not listen to me; he would interrupt me, and order me to be silent. My intercession would irritate him even more, and, instead of delaying the terrible catastrophe, I should be likely to accelerate it."

"Well," exclaimed the princess, wringing her hands, "if you yourself dare not speak and beg for him, let *me*. I am not afraid of the emperor's anger, and when a woman clasps his knees and implores his mercy, he will at least listen, and his heart may be softened. I beseech you to grant me this favor—conduct me to the emperor! Let me implore him to pardon my husband!"

"You are right, it is perhaps the only way to save his life. Napoleon has a generous heart; your tears, perhaps, will touch him, for he cannot bear the sight of a weeping woman, and genuine grief always moves his heart. But just because he is conscious of his weakness, he will avoid seeing you, and give stringent orders not to admit any one. You must, at present forget your rank. You must not insist that the footmen announce you, and open the folding-doors, but you must make up your mind to appear, without any regard to etiquette, before the emperor, and oblige him to grant you an audience."

"Do you not see that I am nothing but a poor, unhappy woman, begging for mercy?" said the princess, with a melancholy smile. "Would I have come to you if I thought still of the rules of etiquette? Give me an opportunity to see the emperor, and, though it were in the open street, and thousands standing by, I should kneel down before him, and, like a beggar-woman, ask for the alms of his mercy—for my husband's life is in his hands!"

"Well, if such be your feelings, princess, I hope to be able to procure you access to him. We must act as generals do in the field, and try to outwit the enemy—we must deprive the emperor of the possibility of avoiding an audience. After his return from Charlottenburg and when once in his rooms, all will be in vain; he will admit no one, and close his ears against all supplications of mine. Hence you must meet him at the moment when he enters the palace. You must—"

A rapid knock at the door interrupted him, and Duroc hastened to open it. "Is it you, Jean?" he asked.

"Yes, M. Grand marshal, it is I," said the footman, "I come to inform your excellency that the emperor is just riding up the Linden with his suite. He will be here in a few minutes."

"All right. Go now, Jean."

"Let us go, too," said the princess, quickly approaching the door. "Give me your arm, M. Grand marshal; I am trembling so, I might sink down before appearing in the presence of the emperor!"

"Come, princess," said Duroc, compassionately, "lean firmly on me. Heaven will give you strength, for you have a noble and fearless heart. Come! I will conduct you to the foot of the staircase, which the emperor will have to ascend in order to reach his rooms. You may accost him there. God and love will impart strength to your words!"

With rapid steps they crossed the suite of rooms and stepped into the so-called Swiss hall, where the orderlies and soldiers of the guard on duty that day were assembled. The bearded warriors looked surprised at the grand marshal—whose face was graver than they had ever seen it in battle—and at this lady, hanging on his arm, as beautiful and pale as a lily. Duroc, who generally had a smile and a pleasant word for the soldiers of the guard, the faithful companions of so many battles, took no notice of them. He hastened with the princess through the hall into the corridor, and down the broad winding stairs opening immediately into the second court-yard of the palace. He then conducted her across through the inside portal to the splendidly-carpeted principal staircase in the rear of the vestibule.

"Await the emperor here," said Duroc, drawing a deep breath. "He will go up this staircase, and he cannot, therefore, avoid meeting you. But he has a sharp eye, and if he should see you from afar, he might, divining your intention, turn around and go the other way. Ascend as far as the first landing. The emperor cannot see you there before he mounts the first steps, and then he will not turn back."

The princess hastily ascended the steps, which she had so often done with a joyous heart, and in a brilliant toilet, when repairing to the festivals of the royal court. Duroc followed her, and told the sentinel posted at the staircase and presenting arms to the grand marshal, that the lady had received orders to wait there for the emperor, who—

Just then the drums rolled, and the guard in the court-yard was called out.

"The emperor!" whispered the princess, sinking down on her knees, clasping her hands and praying silently.

"The emperor!" said Duroc, hastening downstairs into the second court-yard.

Napoleon rode in at that moment, and Duroc, glancing uneasily at him, saw that his mien was even gloomier than previous to his ride; he saw that flashes of anger darted from his eyes, ready to wither the first being that should come near them. On riding up the Linden to-day, he had again missed the wonted music of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" and noticed that the people, standing here and there in groups in the street, when he passed them, had frowned instead of greeting him with the usual cheers. This want of respect, this visible defiance, had darkened his countenance and embittered his soul. Just as he alighted from his horse, and threw the bridle to Roustan, the Mameluke, the grand marshal, pale, panting, and in visible emotion, stepped up to him. Napoleon noticed it, and his angry glance intimidated Duroc.

"You want to inform me that Berlin is seditious?" he asked, in a stern, hard voice. "I am not astonished at it. This city seems to be inclined to such movements. But I am about to set it a terrible example; I will show Berlin in what manner I punish rebels, and will cure its seditious tendency." Striking his boots with his riding-whip, as was his habit when out of humor, he crossed the court-yard in the direction of the staircase.

"No, sire," said Duroc. "Berlin is not seditious. I only intended to implore your majesty's noble and generous heart to grant me a favor."

The emperor looked at him with some surprise, and, advancing rapidly, he set foot on the first step of the staircase, his eyes directed to the grand marshal. "Well, what is it?" he asked, ascending the second step, and turning to Duroc, who was walking behind him.

"Sire, have mercy on the unhappy Princess von Hatzfeld! I beseech your majesty to grant her an audience."

"No, no," exclaimed the emperor, "do not say a word about that! I do not wish to see her, I— But what is this?" he interrupted himself, for he had now reached the first landing, and beheld the princess. She had knelt down, and, stretching out her clasped hands, fixed her large azure eyes on him with a most heart-rending, suppliant air.

Napoleon's brow grew darker than before, and with an angry air he asked, "What does this mean, M. Grand marshal? Who is this lady?"

"Sire, it is the Princess von Hatzfeld," replied Duroc, in a low voice. "She implored me to procure her an interview with your majesty. Sire, pardon me for having conducted her hither, that she herself might beg your majesty for this audience. I counted on your generous heart, which will forgive the wife who comes to implore your mercy for her husband."

"Have you not been told that I have expressly forbidden this affair to be mentioned to me?" exclaimed the emperor, in a threatening voice. "The court-martial alone has to judge the prince, and I will and must not influence its verdict."

"Oh, sire," exclaimed the princess, who was still on her knees, "have mercy on me!—have mercy on my unhappy husband!" Tears choked her voice, and ran in torrents over her pale face.

Napoleon seemed to be moved by this piteous spectacle; his eye became milder, and his frown disappeared. "Madame," he said, bending over her, "rise. A lady in your circumstances ought to kneel before God only. In consideration of your condition, I grant you an interview. Grand marshal, follow me, with the princess." He quickly ascended the staircase, and, without looking round, walked across the halls and rooms to his cabinet. Breathless, scarcely touching the floor with her feet, and strengthened by her profound emotion, the princess walked behind him by the side of Duroc.

"The emperor now enters his cabinet," whispered Duroc. "You have reached your destination."

"My God, have mercy on me!" sighed the princess, and raised her eyes imploringly to heaven. She was now in the cabinet, and Duroc withdrew to the door. Napoleon stood in the middle of the room; the brightly-burning fire shed a light over his whole figure, and rendered prominent his stern features.

"Sire," exclaimed the princess, falling on her knees, "I beseech you have mercy on my husband! Mercy, sire, mercy!"

"Mercy!" ejaculated Napoleon, harshly. "Do you know the crime of which your husband stands accused?"

"Sire, I know only that he worships your majesty; I therefore do not believe in his guilt," exclaimed the princess.

"He has acted the part of a miserable spy," added Napoleon, raising his voice. "After he had already sworn to me the oath of obedience and fealty, he mailed a letter to the King of Prussia, in which he reported to him the number, the spirit, and movements of the French troops. That is the act of a traitor and a spy, and as such he will be found guilty by the court-martial to-morrow."

"Sire, it is impossible! My husband cannot have done any thing of the kind. Oh, believe me, your majesty, he is innocent! He has been slandered in order to bring about his ruin; but he is innocent—assuredly he is innocent! He never wrote such a letter; he cannot have written it!"

The emperor quickly walked to his desk, and took from it a paper, which he handed to her. "Here is the letter," he said. "Do you know your husband's handwriting?"

The princess fixed her eyes, dimmed by tears, on the paper she held in her trembling hands. She then uttered a cry, so piercing and heart-rending, that Duroc, who was standing at the door, felt the tears starting into his eyes. Napoleon himself could not help shuddering.

"It is his handwriting!" muttered the princess, dropping the paper upon the floor. Her quivering lips had now no longer the strength and courage to repeat her prayer—her head fell on her breast, and she uttered only low groans and sobbed.

The emperor seemed to be touched by her wordless yet eloquent grief. His manner, which had hitherto been stern, became gentle and kind, and he looked down with an expression of compassion on that kneeling, despairing form. He stooped, picked up the letter, and placed it in the hands of the princess. "Madame," he said, "here is the letter. Do with it what you please. For this letter is the only thing proving his guilt."

The princess looked up to him with a joyous,

surprised glance. The emperor smiled, and pointed silently to the fireplace. She rose hastily from her knees, rushed toward the fire, and threw the paper into it.

"It is burning! It is burning!" she joyfully shouted. "My husband is saved! My husband is free!" and uttering a scream, she tottered back, and fell in a swoon at the emperor's feet.

Duroc rushed to her aid, and, raising her in his arms, was about to carry her out of the room; but the emperor himself rolled an easy-chair toward her, and assisted Duroc in placing her on it.

"Now, call Roustan," said Napoleon, "he will help you to remove the fainting lady. But quick, lest she awake and thank me! Conduct her to her husband, who is here at the palace. Let her personally announce to him that he is free, and tell him that he is indebted for his release solely to her intercession. Make haste!"

Roustan entered as soon as Duroc called him, and both of them carried the princess on the easy-chair out of the room. The emperor gazed musingly after them, and a sarcastic smile played on his lips. "Well," he said to himself, "I believe this scene will be an excellent match to the oath at the grave of Frederick the Great. It will form a glorious subject for an engraving—one that will be more honorable to me than was the oath to the beautiful queen. Artists will be delighted to publish such an engraving, and the good city of Berlin will say that I am a great man, and know how to forgive injuries."

Just then Talleyrand, who had the right to enter the emperor's cabinet at any time, without being announced, appeared on the threshold.

"Ah, Talleyrand," exclaimed Napoleon, "if you had come a little earlier, you would have witnessed a very touching scene. The Princess von Hatzfeld was here."

"I know it, sire. I have just met the poor fainting lady in the anteroom, and Duroc described to me in a few words what had taken place. How lucky it was that there was a fire in the room!"

The emperor bent a piercing glance upon Talleyrand, but the minister's face was perfectly calm and impenetrable. Not the slightest approach to a sneer was visible in it.

"This proof of generosity will win the hearts of all to your majesty," added Talleyrand. "People will forget Palm; they will only think of Hatzfeld, and praise you as a modern Cæsar. When the letters his enemies had written to Pompey were shown to Cæsar, he refused to read them, and threw them into the fire (there is always a fire burning in the right place and at the right moment), saying, 'Although I am sure to master my anger, yet it is safer to destroy its cause.' Your majesty has followed Cæsar's example, and, if you have no objection, sire, I shall induce Professor Lange to give an enthusiastic and eloquent account of this sublime scene to the inhabitants of Berlin."

"Then you have already gained him over to our side?" asked Napoleon. "The ardent champion of the queen has been converted?"

"He has, sire, thanks to his fear of death, and to the five thousand francs which I offered him, and which had the same effect upon him as a basilisk's eye on the bird. These German journalists, it seems, are even more needy than ours, for they can be had for less."

"Five thousand francs," said Napoleon, musingly, "and for that sum he sells his honor, his fealty, and his conscience! Ah, what miserable creatures men are, after all, and how right are those who despise them!"

"Sire, will you permit me to enter and make my report?" asked Duroc, looking in at the door.

"Come in, grand marshal. And now tell me, how is the poor princess? Has she recovered from her swoon?"

"Yes, sire, she was still unconscious when we carried her into her husband's room. He uttered a loud cry, rushed to her, and clasped her in his arms. She was awakened by his kisses and his anxious and tender ejaculations. A torrent of tears burst forth, and, encircling his neck with her arms, she exclaimed, 'You are saved! You are mine again! the emperor has had mercy on me!'"

"Poor woman! She was really in despair, but behaved very nobly and with a great deal of tact, and I am pleased with her."

Talleyrand scarcely smiled, as he muttered to himself: "Yes, the emperor is right in being pleased with her, for the poor little lady really took the sentimental farce for a tragedy, and neither she nor Duroc looked behind the scenes." *

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* This occurrence is strictly historical, but it is commented upon by the French and German historians in a widely different sense. The French historians, without exception, treat it as a touching proof of the emperor's generosity. So does Thiers in his "Histoire du Consulat et de l'Empire," vol. vii., p. 148; and the Duchess d'Abrantes, in her "Mémoires," vol. xi., p. 240; as well as Constant, in his "Mémoires," vol. iii., p. 380. But the German historians treat it as a well-calculated intrigue, in order to intimidate the nobility by an act of severity, and to conciliate them by the subsequent generosity displayed by the emperor.—Vide "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. ix., p. 316; Schlosser's "History of the Nineteenth Century," vol. vi., p. 232; Haeusser's "History of

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SUPPLIANT PRINCES.

THE hour when Napoleon was to give audience had come, and the ministers of the petty German princes, who had hitherto vainly implored Talleyrand to procure them admission to the emperor, were at length to accomplish their purpose, and to receive from the mouth of the conqueror himself the decision of their fate. He was in his cabinet, pacing it with rapid steps, while Talleyrand was standing at the desk, and with a pencil entering a few notes in his memorandum-book.

"No," said the emperor, sullenly, "I shall have no mercy on these petty German princes, and their miserable whining shall not shake my resolution. Frederick II., who uttered the most cutting sarcasms against these petty sovereigns, would have done much better if he had destroyed these grubs in the tree of royalty—if he had made a new crown from their small coronets. As he failed to do so, I shall not imitate the example set by him, and my brother Jerome shall wear the crown which shall make him a German king."

"Your majesty, then, will adopt the plan of a new kingdom in Northern Germany, which I had the honor to draw up?"

"Yes, but I shall somewhat extend the boundaries, which are too narrow as proposed by you. How much of Hesse, for instance, did you incorporate with the new kingdom?"

"Sire, the entire northern part of Hesse, so that the cities of Marburg and Hersfeld would form the southern boundary of the new kingdom, and that Cassel would be a good capital for the new king."

"And you would leave Hanau and Fulda to that perfidious elector?" asked Napoleon. "No, no, you are too generous. The Elector of Hesse and his whole family deserve to be annihilated, and I am not willing to have mercy on him or on the other petty tyrants. Brunswick, Nassau, Cassel, are all friends of England; they never will be faithful allies of ours; it is best, therefore, to depose them."

"The elector has already sent hither two ambassadors, whom he has authorized to give us the most fervent assurances of unwavering fealty," said Talleyrand, smiling.

"I know the promises of these legitimate princes!" exclaimed Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders. "I know what they are worth. So long as they are in prosperous circumstances, their heart is full of haughtiness and malice. There are, in their eyes, no rights of man—only rights of princes; no subjects—only slaves. But no sooner are calamities approaching than they grow discouraged, and in their cowardice they degrade themselves before their people so far as to flatter them in the most fulsome and abject manner, making promises to them which they are neither able nor willing to fulfil. I have been told that these loquacious Germans, in their impotent wrath, have called me the 'Scourge of God!' Well, then, they shall be right. To these petty princes who are playing the part of great sovereigns, and perverting the *rôle* of royalty and of the throne into a miserable farce—to these caricatures of sovereignty—I will be a 'scourge of God!' I will scourge them to death! Who are now waiting in the anteroom?"

"Sire, there are the two ambassadors of the Elector of Hesse, M. de Malsburg and M. de Lepel; Chancellor von Müller, ambassador of the Duchess of Weimar; M. de Münchhausen, ambassador of the Duke of Brunswick; and, finally, a deputation of Poles, who have come to do homage to your majesty."

"I shall bid the Polish ambassadors welcome," exclaimed Napoleon, emphatically, "and make to these gentlemen many promises representing the most brilliant prospects. An insurrection in Poland just now would be highly conducive to the success of my plans. I will try to bring it about by all the means at my disposal, and accomplish my purpose. Hence, I will even go in person to Warsaw to fan the enthusiasm of the Poles."

"Sire," said Talleyrand, "that will be throwing down the gauntlet to the Austrian government, and if it intends to preserve its Polish provinces, it will have to take it up."

"We must take care that Austria does not regard as a gauntlet the bone that I mean to throw to the Poles," said Napoleon. "You will instruct my ambassador at Vienna to dispel carefully all such suppositions and apprehensions, by repairing to the Emperor of Austria and assuring him that I do not intend to fulfil the promises which I am making to the Poles; that, on the contrary, in

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Germany," vol. iii., p. 42. The view taken by the German historians is supported by the letter of the Prince von Hatzfeld, which formed the sole basis of the charges preferred against him, and which the French take care not to lay before their readers. The incriminated passage was as follows: "Officially I know nothing of the French army, but that I saw yesterday a requisition upon the municipality of Potsdam, signed by D'Aultanne. The French say their army is eighty thousand strong. Others state the number at only fifty thousand. The horses of the cavalry are said to be greatly exhausted."

case a rising should take place in Poland, I will take care not to let it reach Galicia, but to confine it to the Polish provinces of Russia and Prussia, provided the Emperor Francis maintain his present neutrality. Send instructions to-day to this effect to my minister in Vienna. And now I will receive the ambassadors."

"Whom will your majesty admit first?"

"Introduce in the first place the gentlemen from Hesse," said Napoleon, entering the small reception-room contiguous to his cabinet. Talleyrand crossed this room and entered the adjoining audience-hall, in which the plenipotentiaries had already waited for an hour. He beckoned the two ambassadors of Hesse to approach, and introduced them, by virtue of his position as minister of foreign affairs, into the reception-room, where the emperor was waiting for them.

"Sire," he said, "the ambassadors of the Elector of Hesse."

Napoleon returned only a careless nod to their deep obeisances, and went to meet them.

"I admire the Elector of Hesse, because he dares to remind me of himself," said the emperor, sternly. "He has been intriguing against me too long to suppose that I would deal leniently with him. I formerly made friendly offers to him, and requested him to join the Confederation of the Rhine. Then it was time for him to prove his friendship and attachment to me, and to stand by me as a faithful ally. But at that time he still hoped that I would succumb in the struggle with Prussia; the tirades of the officers of the Prussian guard resounded in his ears like the music of a triumph already obtained over me, and drowned the voice of France. But he would not side openly with Prussia either; he would remain neutral until he could distinctly see which side would be victorious. Equivocal in his words and actions, he thought only of the safety of his person and his riches, and not of his country, his people, and his honor! Let him now receive the punishment due to his duplicity; I shall take possession of his states and appropriate his crown. The Elector of Hesse has ceased to reign."

"Sire," said M. de Lepel, in a timid, suppliant voice, "the elector dares to appeal to the generosity of your majesty. Marshal Mortier, with his forces, occupies Cassel and the Hessian states, and declares them to be French possessions. The elector and his crown-prince only escaped imprisonment by flight."

"They have been but too lucky to be allowed to escape," exclaimed Napoleon, angrily. "It is really time to make a rigorous example for once, and to prove to the sovereigns, who regard war as a game of hazard, that it may become very serious, and that they may lose their crown and life by it. That would induce them to weigh well the consequences of war in their councils of state before taking up arms."

"Sire, the elector, our master, repents of what he has done, and acknowledges that he was wrong," said M. de Malsburg, humbly. "His highness is ready to bow to every thing, and to submit to any conditions your majesty may be pleased to impose on him."

"What does that mean?" asked Napoleon. "What does your elector mean by conditions? I do not remember having imposed any conditions on him, for those which I offered six months ago were annulled by the events that have since taken place."

"But the elector hopes that your majesty, nevertheless, will remember them, and show favor instead of deserved punishment. Your majesty, by so sublime an act of generosity, would forever attach our master and his whole house to the French empire. You would have no more faithful and devoted servant in Germany than the Elector of Hesse."

"Sire," said Talleyrand, approaching suddenly, "I am free to intercede for the Elector of Hesse, who is so humbly imploring your majesty to have mercy on him!"

"Sire, have mercy on our unfortunate master, who is wandering about in foreign lands, solitary and deserted!" exclaimed M. de Malsburg, in a tremulous voice.

"Have mercy on our state, and on our people, who are devoted to their legitimate sovereign," said M. de Lepel. "Sire, our soldiers have been disarmed and disbanded; our treasury seized, and a French governor-general is carrying on the administration of our country in the name of your majesty; and still the sovereign and the people hope that Napoleon will have mercy on them—Napoleon, who is called the Great, not only because he knows how to conquer states, but to be generous. Sire, the sword of the conqueror builds only visible thrones that may perish; but the magnanimity of the conqueror builds in the hearts of men thrones that are imperishable."

"Ah, I should not like to count too much on the throne erected in the heart of the Elector of Hesse," said Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders.

"Sire, will not your majesty listen at least to the promises which these gentlemen are authorized to make in the name of the elector?" asked Talleyrand.

"Well, what are they?" asked Napoleon.

"What else have you to say to me in the name of your sovereign?"

"Sire, the elector is ready to submit at discretion to your majesty," said M. de Lepel. "Above all, he will hasten to join the Confederation of the Rhine. Besides, he is ready to pay a contribution—to surrender the fortresses in his states to the French, and to incorporate twelve thousand men with the French army. He only implores your majesty, in consideration of all these sacrifices, to leave him his sovereignty, and the possession of his titles, honors, and hereditary states."

"No," ejaculated the emperor. "No; he has forfeited his sovereignty; he is unworthy of being a prince. There is no dynasty in Germany which has been a more persistent enemy to France than that of Hesse-Cassel. Your master disdained to grasp the hand which I offered to him; the sword has decided now between him and me. Fate urges me to inflict upon him the punishment he has deserved by his misdeeds. Do not tell me the Hessian people sympathize with the fate of the elector, and that they are fondly attached to their legitimate sovereign. It is not true! The people of Hesse are cursing the elector, and they are right in doing so. He sold the blood of his subjects to England for many years, so that she might wage war against us in both hemispheres. To this trade in human beings he is indebted for the riches which he has amassed, and with which he has now fled from his country. Can you deny this, gentlemen? Can you deny, further, that the elector bitterly reproached one of his generals, who commanded the troops sold to England in America, with having held back his men, and with not having led them mercilessly enough into the fire? Do not the Hessians know that the elector upbraided him in this manner only because he received twenty-five ducats for every soldier who was killed in battle? Well, why do you not speak? Tell me that this is untrue—tell me that thousands of mothers are not weeping for their sons who have fallen in America, and whose graves they will never behold—that able-bodied men were not compelled by thousands to leave their country as sold slaves, and that the imprecations of those leaving did not unite with the curses of those remaining, in order one day to become at the throne of God a terrible accusation against him who ruined his states and his people, and enriched himself with the blood and tears of his subjects. Why do you not speak? Dare to say again the Hessian people love their sovereign, and long for his return? Speak!"

His voice rolled like thunder; his eyes darted fiery glances at the two gentlemen, who were standing before him, pale and dismayed, and who dared not look in the face of the emperor. Even Talleyrand, by an involuntary instinct of fear, had withdrawn several steps to the door, and his face, usually so calm and imperturbable, was betraying some apprehensions lest this terrible storm might be discharged on him, too, and some of its bolts hurled at his head.

The two envoys endeavored to utter a few words, but they spoke in so low a voice that no one understood them. They felt that the eyes of Napoleon were still fixed on them, rendering them confused and incapable of making any reply.

A smile, as a sunbeam, flashed through the clouds on the emperor's face, and his glance became milder. "I see at least that you are unable to deny the truth," he said. "Go home, gentlemen! Tell your master his career is finished, and that he has ceased to reign. Tell the people of Hesse, however, that they shall be happy and prosperous henceforward. Delivered from those cruel and infamous compulsory services which the elector was in the habit of imposing upon his subjects, the people will now be able to devote their exclusive attention to the culture of their fields; their taxes shall be diminished, and they shall be ruled in accordance with generous and liberal principles. Tell the people of Hesse what I have said to you! Go!"

He waved his hand imperiously toward the door and turned his back to them. With drooping heads, pale and trembling, MM. de Lepel and de Malsburg left the room. Napoleon stepped to the window, and was vigorously drumming a march on the rattling panes.

"Sire," said the feeble voice of Talleyrand behind him, "sire, the ambassador of the Duke of Brunswick."

"The Duke of Brunswick?" asked Napoleon, quickly turning to the gentleman who was standing by the side of Talleyrand, and who bowed deeply as soon as the emperor fixed his eyes upon him. "The Duke of Brunswick?" repeated Napoleon. "I do not know any Duke of Brunswick. It may be that I shall remember him after a while. Let the dear duke wait until then. I have to attend to more important matters than to quarrel about antiquated and lost titles. Who else desires an audience?"

"Sire, the ambassador of the Duchess of Weimar," said Talleyrand.

"Introduce him," commanded Napoleon, "and in the mean time, sir, explain to me," he said to

M. de Münchhausen—"explain to me who is the Duke of Brunswick."

"Sire, he is a mortally wounded, a blind old man, who implores your majesty to permit him to die quietly in his capital, and sleep in the tomb of his ancestors," said the ambassador, deeply affected. "But in order to die calmly, he implores your majesty to give him the assurance that you will not deprive his son of the inheritance of his ancestors, and that you will not avenge upon the son the misfortunes of the father. Sire, the dying Duke of Brunswick sends me to recommend his family and his state to your majesty."

"The ambassador of the Duchess of Weimar," said Talleyrand, entering with M. de Müller.

The emperor greeted with a rapid nod the envoy of Weimar, and then turned once more to that of the unhappy Duke of Brunswick.

"I know of no Duke of Brunswick," said Napoleon, sternly. "His name and titles have been buried on the battle-field of Auerstadt. What would he who sent you have to say if I were to inflict on the city of Brunswick that subversion with which, fifteen years ago, he threatened the capital of the great nation which I command? * The Duke of Brunswick has disavowed the insensate manifesto of 1792; one would have thought that with age reason had begun to get the better of his passions, and yet he has again lent the authority of his name to the follies of hot-headed youth, which have brought ruin upon Prussia. To him it belonged to put women, courtiers, and young officers, into their proper places, and to make all feel the authority of his age, of his understanding, and position. But he had not the strength to do so, and the Prussian monarchy is demolished, and the states of Brunswick are in my power. Tell him that I shall show him that consideration which is due to an unfortunate general, justly celebrated, struck by that fate which may reach us all; but that I cannot recognize a sovereign prince in a general of the Prussian army. After his conduct toward France he cannot expect me to exercise toward him a ridiculous and undeserved generosity."

The ambassador of Brunswick withdrew, sighing, and with tearful eyes.† The emperor looked gloomily at him till he had disappeared.

"And now, Talleyrand, I will go to greet the envoys of Poland," he said, taking his hat, and advancing a few steps. But at that moment his eyes, as if accidentally, seemed to behold M. de Müller, who was standing by the side of Talleyrand. "Ah, I forgot the ambassador of the Duchess of Weimar. Well, perhaps it would have been fortunate for you if I had forgotten you. For when remembering you, I must remember the arrogance and obstinacy of that little duke who dared to oppose me and endeavored to frustrate my will."

"Sire," said M. de Müller, "the duke believed that his honor, his duty, and his rank required him not to act contrary to military fealty. He was connected with Prussia by virtue of military treaties of long years' standing; hence, he believed it incumbent on him to adhere to them even when the King of Prussia, to the profound personal regret of the duke, entered into open hostilities against France."

"Ah, bah! treaties!" ejaculated Napoleon. "I tell you, your duke had not his senses about him when he dared to oppose me. This is a good time for any prince to lose his states in a moment. You have just seen how I have acted in the case of the Duke of Brunswick. I shall have no mercy on those who oppose me and dare to bid me defiance! I will drive these wolves back into the swamps of Italy, whence they came!" Throwing his hat with an angry gesture

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* When the Duke of Brunswick, at the head of the army of the King of Prussia, took the field against the French, he said, in a manifesto to his troops, "We will conquer and burn the rapacious city of Paris."

† As soon as M. de Münchhausen returned to Brunswick and communicated to the unfortunate duke the utter failure of his mission and Napoleon's threatening reply, the mortally wounded old man left his capital and state, in order not to run the additional risk of being taken prisoner by the French. On leaving his palace, carried on a litter by his faithful servants, he was heard to wail in a low voice, "*Quelle honte! quelle honte!*" and the tears burst from the sockets of his ruined eyes. The Duke of Brunswick had gone by way of Celle, Hamburg, and Altona, to Ottensen, a village on Danish soil. But since the day on which he had been compelled to leave the palace of his ancestors and his state as a fugitive, he would take no food; he would not support the burden of life any more—death by starvation was to deliver him from his sufferings. It was in vain that his servants and his faithful physician implored him to desist from this fatal purpose; he remained immovable. Only once the supplications of his physician succeeded in persuading him to eat an oyster. Formerly oysters had been a favorite dish of the duke, and they excited his appetite even now. But scarcely had he tasted it when he repented of his weakness, and his fixed purpose to die of hunger returned as intensely as ever. He spit out the oyster and cried, "Man, what are you doing? You give me my eyes to eat!" Henceforward it was impossible to shake his determination. He died after long, excruciating sufferings, on the 10th of November, 1806, at Ottensen. His remains were brought back to Brunswick on the 10th of November, 1810, by his son and successor, Duke Frederick William, so famous as commander of the Corps of Vengeance.

on the floor, the emperor added in a loud voice, "Like this hat, I will crush them, so that no one in Germany will ever think of them. I feel really tempted to treat your prince in the same manner!"

"Sire, your majesty, however, condescended to lend a favorable ear to the prayers of the Duchess of Weimar," said the ambassador, in a timid voice.

"It is true," said Napoleon, "the duchess is a noble lady; if I pardon her husband, it is only for her sake, and because she is a sister of a princess closely related to me. But you ought not to rely too much on my forbearance and generosity. If the duke persist any longer in his resistance—if it be true that he has not yet left the Prussian service—I take back the promise I gave the duchess, and your duke shall learn what it is to oppose me!"

"Sire," said M. de Müller, "the duchess sent me hither in order to inform your majesty that her husband has left the Prussian service, and will return to Weimar to occupy himself only with the welfare of his own state. She ventures now to remind your majesty of your promise to forgive the duke and leave him in possession of his inheritance."

"Well, if that be so, I shall fulfil my promise," said Napoleon, in a milder voice. "I shall not deprive your master of his sovereignty; but, as a matter of course, he will have to submit to some sacrifices. I shall communicate my wishes concerning this point to my minister, M. de Talleyrand, and he will inform you of them. Do not fail to give the duke distinctly to understand that he is indebted for his state and political existence solely to the respect I feel for his wife and her sister, the Margravine of Baden." The conqueror nodded to the envoy and walked toward the door leading into the audience-hall. Talleyrand quickly picked up the emperor's hat from the floor, and carrying it to him, said, "Sire, you have lost your hat."

Napoleon smiled. "Well," he said, "now-a-days, when so many lose their heads and their crowns, a man may be pardoned for once losing his hat. Come, accompany me to the good, enthusiastic Poles!"

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIUMPH AND DEFEAT.

SCARCELY had the emperor crossed the threshold of the audience-hall, when it resounded with cheers and the constantly-repeated shout of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" He thanked the envoys of Poland for these greetings, and quickly approached them. They presented a magnificent spectacle in their national costume, adorned as it was with gorgeous embroidery and diamonds. "Introduce these gentlemen to me, Talleyrand," he said; "I will cherish in my memory the names of those whom henceforth I shall regard as friends!"

When Talleyrand presented them in succession, Napoleon listened to each of their high-sounding old aristocratic names with a kindly nod and a gracious air, which delighted the hearts of the Poles.

"Sire," said the Count of Dombrowsky, a silvery-haired man of seventy years—"sire, in bending our knees before your majesty, we represent all Poland, which is exclaiming, 'God save Napoleon the Great!—the liberator of nations!'"

"God save Napoleon the Great!—the liberator of nations!" echoed the others, kneeling down and extending their arms toward the emperor.

"Liberator of nations!" repeated Napoleon, smiling. "No one can liberate nations unless they do so themselves."

"But, in order to liberate themselves, the nations stand in need of a noble and high-minded chieftain!" exclaimed the old count. "Sire, the Polish nation trusts in you; it is on its knees, praying your majesty that you may become the liberator whom it has so long looked for. The great Napoleon has arisen upon France like a sun—he has come, seen, and vanquished the universe! O invincible Cæsar! In seeing you, all my wishes and those of my countrymen are fulfilled! Already we consider our country as saved, for in your person we worship the wisest and most equitable of legislators. You will redeem us! You will not permit Poland to be dismembered. Oh, sire, Poland puts her trust in the redeemer of nations! Poland puts her trust in Napoleon the Great, who will raise her from her degradation!"

"Poland puts her trust in you," repeated the Poles; and, in the enthusiasm of their patriotism, forgetful of etiquette, they crowded around Napoleon, and, again kneeling, kissed his hands and the hem of his garment.

Napoleon smilingly allowed them to do so, but his eyes assumed a graver expression. "Rise now, gentlemen," he said, "I have received through you the homage of poor, weeping Polonia, but now let me receive also in you the brave sons of this unhappy land, and speak to the *men* of Poland. Rise!"

The Poles rose, and looked with beaming eyes

and in breathless suspense at the emperor, whose face exhibited the austere regularity of a statue of ancient Rome.

"It would afford me the liveliest pleasure to see the royal throne of Poland restored," he said, "for it would also secure the independence of the adjoining states, which are now threatened by the unmeasured ambition of Russia. But words and idle wishes are not sufficient. When the priests, the nobility, and the citizens, make common cause—when they are determined to conquer or die—then they will triumph, and may count on my protection."

"Sire, the nobility, priests, and citizens, are already united and resolved," exclaimed Count Dombrowsky. "We are only waiting for our liberator to proclaim our independence."

Napoleon assumed a very serious air. "I cannot proclaim your independence before you are determined, sword in hand, to defend your rights as a nation."

"Sire, we are so determined!" unanimously shouted the Poles.

The emperor received this interruption with a gracious smile and added: "You have been upbraided with losing sight of your genuine interest, and of the welfare of your country, during your long-continued domestic dissensions. Taught by your misfortunes, be harmonious, and prove to the world that the whole Polish nation is animated by one spirit."

"Sire, we will prove it to the world," exclaimed the Poles, lifting up their hands, as if taking a solemn oath.

The emperor turned his stern eyes slowly and piercingly from one to another. He apparently wished to greet them all, and to read the innermost recesses of their hearts. Then he said, in a loud voice, "The restoration of Poland requires blood—blood, and, again, *blood!*"

"Sire, we are joyously ready to shed ours for the sacred cause of the fatherland," exclaimed Count Raczinsky. "We wish to know only, or at least hope, that it will not be in vain. Sire, Poland is extending her arms toward you; she is beckoning you with a passionate love; she is longingly calling to you, 'Great Cæsar, come to my aid, that the sun may once more beam upon me—that you may disperse the long night of my torture, and that a happy day may again dawn for me!' Oh, sire, will you listen to the supplications of Poland?—will you come to her and break her chains?"

"No," said Napoleon, "I will not go to weeping Poland, shaking her chains, and only wailing and complaining instead of acting, but I will go to the men and heroes of Poland, who have thrown off their fetters, and shed their blood for their country! Go home and tell this to your countrymen, and ask *them* when I shall come!"

"Sir, they will say as we say now, 'God save Cæsar! We clash our swords, and dance the sacred war-dance, that he may come and let us see his face!'"

"As soon as it is time," said Napoleon, significantly. "Go, my friends, and tell your countrymen so. The time for weeping is past—that for action has come. Improve it, and be wise. Return home as fast as you can, for I should like to be with you before the present year has expired. Farewell!"

He greeted them in so winning a manner that, charmed with his affability, they again enthusiastically shouted, "Long live Napoleon the Great, the liberator of nations!" Amid the cheers of the sanguine Poles, Napoleon returned to the small reception-room, accompanied by Talleyrand, whom he had beckoned to follow.

"Well," asked he, when they were alone, "what do you think of it? Will the Poles rise?"

"I am convinced of it, sire! Your words were like the steel striking the flint, and kindling the tinder of their national ardor. It will burn, sire—burn so brightly that Russia, Austria, and Prussia, may be badly injured in their Polish provinces."

"Certainly not Austria," said Napoleon, quickly; "for the rest, we shall know how to extinguish the fire as soon as it burns too extensively. Forward your dispatch to our ambassador in Vienna today. He is to assure the Emperor of Austria in the most emphatic manner that I do not intend permitting the Polish insurrection to spread too far, and that his Galician provinces, at all events, shall not be endangered.—Well, Duroc, what do you bring?" continued he, when the door opened, and the grand marshal entered with a letter in his hand.

"Sire, I bring two messages at the same time. In the first place, a new envoy of the King of Prussia has just arrived; he is the bearer of this letter which the king, who is now at Graudenz, has addressed to your majesty."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, "he is at Graudenz, which is still closer to the boundary of his states. But I will drive him to the last town on the frontier. The queen must learn what it is to provoke a war!" He took the letter, which Duroc handed to him, and opened it hastily.

"Sire," said Duroc, "the bearer of that letter, Major von Rauch, asks the favor of an audience,

in order to lay before your majesty the wishes and requests of his king, who has orally communicated them to him."

Napoleon turned to Talleyrand. "Receive him first," he said; "then report to me, and we shall see whether I can grant him an interview. But, wait a moment! Let us first see what is in the king's letter." He broke the seal and unfolded the paper. When about to read it, he raised his eyes toward Duroc.

"Sire, Prince Augustus of Prussia has just arrived as a prisoner of war, escorted by a detachment of our soldiers. The Grand-duke of Berg sends him to your majesty as a trophy of your victory. Colonel de Gerard accompanies him."

"Did the prince behave as a brave soldier?" asked Napoleon.

"Sire, Colonel de Gerard states that even our own men admired his heroism. The prince had separated himself with a battalion of grenadiers from the corps of the Prince von Hohenlohe, and was marching along the Uker. Our dragoons were pursuing him, but he repulsed them repeatedly, and would have succeeded in escaping, with his soldiers, if the impassable character of the ground had not detained him. He got into a marshy country, intersected by many small canals, which greatly impeded him. The horses sank into the mud, and their riders had to alight and lead them. The prince also was compelled to wade through on foot. He was leading his charger by the bridle, and just as he felt firm ground under him, and was about mounting, the horse broke from him and plunged into the Uker to save its own life. Our dragoons succeeded then in overtaking and capturing the prince; and the Prussians, seeing that their leader was taken, also surrendered. The grand-duke reports this affair at length to your majesty, because he knows that you honor bravery in an enemy, and because this living trophy would no doubt assume a higher value in your eyes."

"Where is the prince?" asked Napoleon, quickly.

"Sire, he is in the anteroom, and awaits whatever disposition your majesty may make of him. Sire, he humbly requests your majesty to permit him to repair to his parents, to recover from his wounds."

"I will see him. Admit him at once."

"Sire, would not your majesty graciously permit him to arrange his toilet a little?" asked Duroc. "The prince is not dressed sufficiently well to appear before your majesty."

"No matter," said Napoleon. "Bring him in immediately." He waved his hand to Duroc, and then looked again at the letter, which he still held in his hand.

Talleyrand, who was standing near him, fixed his subtle eyes on the emperor's face. He saw that it brightened up with proud satisfaction, and that gradually a cold, disdainful smile played on his lips.

"I shall be able to impose very rigorous conditions upon the new Prussian envoys," said Talleyrand to himself; "the king seems to submit very humbly, for the pride of a *triumphator* is beaming on the emperor's forehead."

Just then Napoleon threw the letter impetuously on the table. "Read it, Talleyrand," he said, carelessly. "It is always instructive to see how small these men are in adversity, and how overbearing in prosperity. And such men desire to be sovereign princes, and wear a crown!"

Talleyrand was extending his hand toward the letter when the door opened, and the grand marshal entered.

"Sire," he exclaimed, "Prince Augustus of Prussia."

"Let him come in," said Napoleon, sitting down slowly and carelessly in the easy-chair, covered with purple velvet, which was standing in the middle of the room. He beckoned Talleyrand to come to him.

At this moment there appeared on the threshold the tall, slender form of Prince Augustus of Prussia. Duroc was right; the prince was not in very courtly trim to appear before the emperor. His uniform was torn and bespattered; he had but one boot, and that covered with mire; the other had stuck in the marshy ground near Schönermark, and he had replaced it by a heavy wooden shoe, such as those worn by German peasants; his right arm was in a linen bandage, flecked with blood, and an oblique wound, covered with a broad black plaster, was on his forehead. Such was the miserable condition in which the nephew of Frederick the Great appeared in the brilliant halls of the royal palace of Prussia before the conqueror of his country and of his house, who received him, seated, and scarcely nodded in return to the stiff military salutation of the prince. Napoleon looked sternly at the prisoner, and his lips betrayed the anger seething in his breast. The prince, however, apparently did not notice this, nor feel uneasy and irritated at the singular situation in which he found himself; his eyes met those of the emperor calmly and fearlessly; he did not bow his head, but carried it erect; not a trace of fear or sorrow was to be seen in his youthful countenance; a faint smile indeed was playing on his

red, full lips when he glanced over the room, and again at Napoleon, behind whom Talleyrand and Duroc were standing in a most respectful attitude.

"You are a brother of Prince Louis Ferdinand, who was killed at Saalfeld?" asked the conqueror, in a harsh voice.

"Yes, sire, I am a son of Prince Ferdinand of Prussia," was the grave reply.

"A nephew of Frederick II.," exclaimed Napoleon. "A nephew of the heroic king who loved France so well, that his heart and opinions were those of a Frenchman."

"Sire," said the prince, calmly, "history teaches, however, that the great king was not always the friend of that country, and that his love for it did not prevent him from waging war against it. His enmity against France gained him no less glory than his friendships for its poets and *savants*.

"Ah, you refer to Rossbach," said Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders. "We have expunged that name with the names of Jena and Auerstadt, and the monument that once stood on the battle-field of Rossbach is now on the way to Paris—a trophy of our victorious army." *

The prince bent his head a little. "It is true," he said, "the goddess of victory is very fickle. The future therefore consoles those who have succumbed in the present."

The emperor cast an angry glance on the prince, who met it with a bold, unflinching air.

"I see you are, both by birth and sentiment, a brother of Prince Louis Ferdinand," said Napoleon. "Like him, you belonged to the hot-headed young men who would have war at any price. Hard blows were required to moderate your war-fever. I hope you are cured of it now. Your brother has expiated his mad arrogance on the battle-field of Saalfeld. It is your fate to return as a prisoner of war in the most pitiful plight to the capital of Prussia, which you left a few weeks since with such foolish hopes of victory. You ought to have listened in time to reason, and not to the siren voice of the queen, who, in a manner so disastrous to Prussia, inveigled all the young men to plunge into the Charybdis of war, and—"

"Sire," said the prince, interrupting him in an almost threatening voice—"sire, no reflections on the queen, if you please! Having conquered us, you are at liberty to humiliate and abuse the vanquished, if your majesty derive pleasure from such a triumph, but the noble and unhappy queen should not be dragged into a quarrel of men. We do not claim the excuse of having been inveigled by her, and her exalted virtue does not deserve that charge."

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, scornfully, "like all young men, you seem to belong to the enthusiastic admirers of the queen."

"Sire, that proves that the young men of Prussia are still imbued with respect for virtue. It is true we all adore the queen as our tutelary saint; she is the radiant pattern of our mothers, our wives, and daughters; she is the ideal of all—and those who have once been so happy as to have seen and spoken with her, bow to her in love and admiration."

"Had all of you bowed less to her, Prussia would not now lie humiliated in the dust," said the emperor, harshly. "Prussia and France are destined by Nature to be friends, and I, who never have sought war, but always regarded it only as a deplorable necessity, was greatly inclined to offer my hand to Prussia in peace and friendship. But your queen and your officers of the guard were bent on having war, and believed they would win laurels by waging it. Now you have it with all its terrors. What has it brought upon you? You have lost a brother by it, and you yourself had to lay down your arms at Prenzlau."

"Sire," said the prince, in generous pride, "I request your majesty not to confound me with those who concluded the capitulation of Prenzlau. I did not capitulate; I was taken prisoner, sword in hand, but I did not surrender it voluntarily."

"Young man," said Napoleon, in grave, cold calmness, "beware of being plunged into deeper distress by your haughty spirit. The Prussian princes are not now in a position to utter high-sounding words. Your king is fully aware of this. Listen attentively to what I tell you: he has begged me for peace in the most submissive manner; he is imploring me to grant him my friendship, and calls himself happy because I am dwelling in his palaces."

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* On the day after the battle of Jena, the emperor said to General Savary, while riding across the battle-field of Rossbach, between Halle and Merseburg: "Gallop to the left in this direction; about half a mile from here you will find the column erected by the Prussians in memory of that battle." Savary advanced in the direction indicated, and found the small column in the middle of a corn-field. Waving his handkerchief, General Savary made a sign that he had succeeded in discovering the monument, and Napoleon galloped with his suite across the plain to contemplate it. The storms of half a century had beaten upon it, and it was difficult to decipher the numerous inscriptions with which it was covered. The division of General Suchet just passing the spot, the emperor ordered them to have the monument removed and sent to Paris. The pieces were put into a caisson, and the orders executed.—"Mémoires du Duc de Rovigo," vol. ii., p. 293.

"Sire, that is impossible," exclaimed the prince, carried away by his impulsive temper.

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders, and then turned his head a little aside toward his minister. "M. Talleyrand, please read to us the letter," he said; "I merely glanced over it.—Owing to the portentous events of the last days, you are, prince, without direct news from the king. You may, then, derive from this letter some information concerning his situation and sentiments. Read, M. Minister! And you, prince, take a seat."

He pointed to one of the chairs standing near the door. Prince Augustus, however, did not accept this gracious invitation. He bowed, and said, smiling, "Your majesty will permit me to stand, for my costume is hardly in harmony with gilt chairs, and I believe it behooves a poor vagabond like myself to stand humbly at the door. Moreover, Prussian etiquette requires us to stand in listening to the words of our sovereign."

"Read, Talleyrand," said the emperor, and leaning back carelessly, he tried to discover in the prince's face the impression which the king's letter would make upon him. Talleyrand read as follows:

"*Monsieur mon Frère:* When I begged your imperial majesty to grant me peace, I consulted my reason, but I have now consulted my heart. In spite of the terrible sacrifices which you have imposed on me, sire, I desire most anxiously that the treaty, which has already been secured by the approval of the main points, will entitle me soon to resume my amicable relations with your imperial majesty, which the war interrupted for a moment. It is an agreeable duty for me, *monsieur mon frère*, to manifest, by a proof of confidence, my sincere desire to cultivate your friendship; and I believe I do this by stopping the further advance of the Russian troops, without waiting for the definitive conclusion of peace.

"I was anxious that your majesty should be received and treated at my palaces in a manner agreeable to you. I have zealously taken such steps as were necessary for that purpose, and, according to my power, in the situation in which I am now, I hope my endeavors have been successful. In return, your majesty will permit me to recommend my capital and the province of Brandenburg to your generosity. This province, so little favored by Nature, is, as it were, a creation of my immortal ancestor. I hope, sire, you will regard it as a monument he erected to himself; and the numerous points in which your majesty resembles that great man, I trust, will be an additional inducement for you to order his work to be treated in a magnanimous manner.

"Besides, I should like to request your majesty kindly to exempt the district of Halberstadt and the duchy of Magdeburg from the cruel losses you are imposing on me. Such an order I should regard as a precious guaranty of your personal feelings toward me, and you may depend upon it, sire, I should zealously strive to reciprocate these feelings in the most cordial manner. I pray God to take you in his Holy keeping, and remain, *monsieur mon frère*,

"Your majesty's obedient servant,

"FREDERICK WILLIAM."

While the letter was being read, Napoleon did not avert his eyes for a single moment from the countenance of the prince. He saw that he blushed with indignation at first, and that gradually a profound grief overshadowed his noble features.

"Well, was I not right?" asked Napoleon, when Talleyrand had concluded. "Does not your king submit to all my conditions? Does he not bid me welcome to his palaces?"

"Sire," said the prince, mournfully, "it does not behoove me to censure the words of my king. When he has spoken, I must be silent. I only dare to observe that your majesty may see from this letter that the queen does not meddle with government affairs. Had she done so, your majesty, no doubt, would not have received this letter of Count Haugwitz."

"Of Count Haugwitz?" asked Napoleon. "Of the king, you mean?"

"Sire, the king lent to this letter only his name and handwriting; Count Haugwitz furnished the words and the spirit it breathes."

"Then you believe that the queen does not share the views of her husband?" asked the emperor, hastily. "You believe she would still insist on the further continuation of the war if her opinion were consulted?"

"Sire, I only take the liberty to state that she would not have written such a letter."

"I know it very well!" exclaimed Napoleon. "Your queen hates me; she would die rather than beg my friendship; she would bury herself under the ruins of her throne rather than put an end to this war and call me her brother. But I will bend that haughty soul—I will crush her heart, and make her repent of what she is doing. I will—but," he suddenly interrupted himself, "what is the matter with you! You turn pale! You are tottering, prince!"

The emperor arose and advanced a few steps; but the prince motioned him back. "It is nothing," he said faintly, "only a momentary weakness—that is all. I have not taken rest for several days and

nights, and loss of blood has exhausted my strength. Besides—why should I shrink from confessing it—I am hungry, sire; I have eaten nothing for the last twenty-four hours."

"Poor young man," said Napoleon, compassionately, as he approached the prince, "I deplore your misfortunes. Personally you have not deserved them, for I know you have fought bravely, and are worthy of a better fate than that of a prisoner of war; but will you give me your word of honor that you will not attempt to escape or participate again in this war against me?"

"Sire," said the prince, pointing at his wounded right arm, "sire, I believe I must give you my word of honor. I am your prisoner, and shall not attempt to escape."

"Then go to your parents. I permit you to remain at the house of Prince Ferdinand until you have recovered from your wounds. I will not deprive your mother any longer of the pleasure of embracing her brave son. Go, then, to her!" The prince bowed and was about to withdraw.

"Well, prince, have you not a word of thanks for me?" asked Napoleon, kindly.

The prince smiled mournfully. "Sire," he said, bowing deeply, "sire, I thank you for treating me so leniently."

CHAPTER XV.

THE VICTORIA OF THE BRANDENBURG GATE.

Without waiting for further permission to withdraw, the prince hastily opened the door and went out. For a moment he sat down in the anteroom, for his feet were trembling so as to be scarcely able to support him, and such a pallor overspread his cheeks that Colonel Gerard, who had been waiting, hastened to him in dismay, and asked whether he would permit him to call a physician. Prince Augustus smilingly shook his head. "The physician of whom I stand in need is in my mother's kitchen," he said, "and your emperor has permitted me to seek him." Just then the grand marshal entered the room, and, making a sign to Gerard, whispered a few words into his ear.

"Your royal highness is delivered from the burden of my company," said the colonel to the prince when Duroc had withdrawn. "Permit me, however, to conduct you to the carriage that is to convey you to the palace of Prince Ferdinand."

In the court-yard below, an imperial carriage was waiting, and Colonel Gerard himself hastened to open the door to assist the prince in entering. But the latter waved his hand deprecatingly, and stepped back. "I am unworthy of entering the imperial carriage," he said. "See, even the coachman, in his livery, looks elegant compared with me; and all Berlin would laugh, if it should see me ride in the emperor's magnificent coach. Let me, therefore, walk off quite humbly and modestly and enter the first conveyance I meet. Farewell, colonel, and accept my thanks for the great attention and kindness you have manifested toward me."

The prince kindly shook hands with him and then hastily walked across the court-yard of the palace toward the place in front of it—the so-called *Lustgarten*. He crossed this place and the wide bridge, built across an arm of the Spree, without meeting with any vehicle. But the fresh air, and the sense that he was free, agreed with him so well that he felt strong enough to proceed on foot to his father's palace.

"No one recognizes me in this miserable costume," he said, smiling—"no notice will be taken of me, and I will be able to reach my home without being detained." And he walked vigorously across the Opera Place toward the Linden. This neighborhood, generally so lively and frequented, was strangely deserted—no promenaders—none of the contented and happy faces, formerly to be met with on the Opera Place and under the Linden, were to be seen to-day. Only a few old women were mournfully creeping along here and there; and, when the prince passed the guard-house, he saw French soldiers standing in the front, who looked arrogantly and scornfully at the Prussian officer, and did not think of saluting him.

"Ah, my brother," muttered Prince Augustus to himself, "your prophecy has been quickly fulfilled! The drums are no longer beaten when we ride out of the gate and pass the guard-house. Well, I do not care. I would gladly do without such honors, if Prussia herself only were honored—if—"

A noise, proceeding from the lower end of the Linden, interrupted his soliloquy. He advanced more rapidly to see what was going on. The shouts drew nearer and nearer, and a dark, surging crowd was hastening from the entrance of the Linden through the Brandenburg Gate. Soon the prince was able to discern more distinctly the character of the multitude approaching. They were French soldiers, marching up the street, and on the sidewalk, as well as in the middle of the Linden; the people and the citizens belonging to the national guard accompanying them—the latter in the brilliant uniform which they had put on

with the consent of the French authorities, who, now that there were no Prussian troops in Berlin, had permitted them to mount guard together with the French. But the people and the national guard did not accompany the French soldiers quietly; on the contrary, the bewildered prince distinctly heard the sneers, the derisive laughter, and jeers of the crowd; even the boys in the tree-tops were casting down their abusive epithets. When the procession drew nearer, and the people surrounded the prince, he discovered the meaning of these outbursts of scorn and derision.

A strange and mournful procession was moving along in the midst of the splendidly uniformed French soldiers. It consisted of the captured officers of the Prussian guard, who had been obliged to walk from Prenzlau to Berlin, and whom the French grenadiers had received outside of the city limits and escorted by the walls to the Brandenburg Gate, so that, in accordance with the emperor's orders, they might make their entry through that way. Two months before, they had marched out of the same gate in full uniform, proud and arrogant, looking down superciliously on the civilians, whose humble greetings they scarcely condescended to return. Two months before, General von Rüchel had been able to exclaim: "A Prussian officer never goes on foot." The Prussian guard had really believed that it would be scarcely worth while to draw their swords against the French—that it would be sufficient merely to march against them. But now the disastrous days of Jena had taught the officers how to walk—now they did not look down scornfully from their horses on poor civilians, and faith in their own irresistibility had utterly disappeared. They marched with bowed heads, profoundly humiliated, and compelled to suppress the grief overflowing their hearts. Their uniforms were hanging in rags on emaciated forms, and the colors of the cloth and the gold-lace facings were hidden beneath the mud that covered them. Their boots were torn, and robbed of the silver spurs; and, as in the case of Prince Augustus of Hohenzollern, many wore wooden shoes. But in spite of this miserable and heart-rending spectacle, the populace had no pity, but accompanied the melancholy procession with derisive laughter and insulting shouts!

"Just look at those officers," exclaimed a member of the national guard, approaching the soldiers—"look at those high-born counts! Do you remember how proud they used to be? How they despised us at the balls, in the saloons, and everywhere else? How we had always to stand aside in the most submissive manner, in order not to be run down by them? They will not do so again for some time to come."

"No," cried the crowd, "they won't hurt anybody now! Their pomp and circumstance have vanished!"

"Just look at Baron von Klitzing!" exclaimed another. "See how the wet rim of his hat is hanging down on his face, as though he were a modest girl wishing to veil herself. Formerly, he used to look so bold and saucy; seeming to believe the whole world belonged to him, and that he needed only to stretch out his hand in order to capture ten French soldiers with each finger."

"Yes, yes, they were tremendous heroes on marching out," shouted another; "every one of the noble counts and barons had already his laurel in his pocket, and was taking the field as though it were a ballroom, in order to put his wreath on his head. Now they have come back, and the laurels they have won are not even good enough to boil carps with." A roar of laughter followed this hit, and all eyes turned again in ridicule toward the poor officers, who were marching along, mournfully and silently, with downcast yet noble bearing.

Filled with anger and shame, Prince Augustus pressed through the crowd. He could not bear this disgraceful scene; he had to avert his head in order not to see the unfortunate Prussian officers; he hurried away, that he might hear no more the cruel taunts of the populace. The ranks became less dense, and this terrible procession passed by—the street was once more unobstructed. The prince rushed onward regardless of the direction he was taking, crushed as he was by the disgrace and wretchedness brought upon Prussia. He was again suddenly in front of a large gathering. He looked about him wonderingly and in dismay. Without knowing it, he had gone down to the large square in front of the Brandenburg Gate, where was a dense crowd.

But the thousands here did not utter sneers or praises—they were sad and silent; there was no malicious sparkle in their eyes as they rushed in one direction to the Brandenburg Gate.

The prince beheld an inclined scaffold erected near the lofty Grecian pillars of the gate, and reaching up to the cast-iron goddess of victory, standing in her triumphal car, and holding the reins of her horses. He saw the ropes, pulleys, and chains, attached to her form, and it seemed to him as if they were around his own breast, and choking his voice. He had to make an effort to utter a word, and, turning to a man standing by, he asked in a low voice, "What is going on here? What are they doing up there?"

The man looked at him long and mournfully. "The French are removing the 'Victoria' from the gate," he said, with suppressed anger. "They believe the statue no longer suitable to Berlin, and the emperor is sending it to Paris, whither he has already forwarded the sword and clock of Frederick the Great."

The prince uttered a groan of despair. At that moment a loud French command was heard by the gate, and as if the "Victoria" were conscious, and obedient to the orders of the emperor, a tremor seemed to seize the goddess. She rose as the horses began to descend, and her figure bent forward as if greeting Berlin for the last time. A loud noise resounded above the heads of the crowd—the "Victoria" had glided safely to the ground. The prince uttered a cry, and, as if paralyzed, closed his eyes. When he opened them again the beautiful pillars of the Brandenburg Gate had been deprived of their ornament, and the "Victoria," with her triumphal horses, stood deposed from her lofty throne.

Prince Augustus raised his tearful eyes to heaven and whispered, "Oh, my brother, I envy you your death, for it was not permitted you to behold the humiliation and sorrow of Prussia!"

BOOK II.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE TREATY OF CHARLOTTENBURG.

QUEEN LOUISA was pacing her room in great excitement. At times she stood still at the window, and looked anxiously into the street as if expecting the arrival of some one. But that street—the main one in Osterode, in which city the royal couple had spent the last few days—remained silent and deserted. Large snow-flakes were falling from the cheerless, lead-colored sky, and the November storm was now sweeping them into little mounds, and again dispersing them in clouds of white dust. The queen beheld nothing but this winter scene; she sighed and returned to her room to pace it as rapidly as before.

But she was constantly drawn to the window, gazing into the street and listening breathlessly to any noise that reached her ears. "If he should not come," she muttered anxiously, "or if too late, all would be lost, and the cowards and babblers would be able once more to persuade my husband to yield to their clamor for peace. Heaven have mercy on our unhappy country and on ourselves!"

Suddenly she started up, and leaned closer to the window in order to see better. Yes, she had not been mistaken. In the lower part of the street a carriage was to be seen. The storm prevented her from hearing the noise of the wheels, but she saw it—it drew nearer and nearer, and finally stopped in front of the house. The queen stepped back, and, drawing a deep breath, she raised her eyes to heaven. "I thank Thee, my God! Thou hast had mercy on my anguish," she whispered with a gentle smile. She then walked slowly and faintly across the room toward the divan and sank down on it. "Ah," she muttered, "this eternal anxiety, this unrelieved suspense and excitement are consuming my strength—nay, my life. My feet are trembling; my heart stands entirely still at times, and then beats again as violently as if it would burst from my breast. But, no matter! I, am quite willing to die if I only live to see the deliverance of my country and the preservation of my house. She dropped her head on the cushions and gazed with dilated eyes at the sky. But, on hearing a low rap at the door, she slowly rose and called out in her full, sonorous voice, "Come in!" The door opened, and Madame von Berg entered.

"Well, Caroline, he has arrived, I suppose?" asked the queen.

"No, your majesty," said Madame von Berg, smiling, "*they* have arrived. The two ministers, Baron von Stein and Count von Hardenberg request your majesty to grant them an audience."

"Hardenberg!" exclaimed Louisa joyfully, and her pale face brightened. "Oh, let them come in—immediately!"

The queen quickly left the divan and walked toward the door. But Madame von Berg hastened to reach it before her and opened it. "Come in, gentlemen," she said; "her majesty is waiting for you!"

"Yes, I am waiting for you," exclaimed Louisa, meeting them, and with a sweet smile extending both her hands.

The ministers bowed and kissed her hand. Madame von Berg had in the mean time locked the door leading into the small anteroom, and withdrew softly by the opposite door.

"Then you received the message the king sent you?" asked the queen, turning toward Baron von Stein. "And you did not hesitate a moment to come here? And you, count," added she, turning toward Hardenberg, "you did the same as this faithful friend? Having heard that the decisive moment had come, you did not hesitate to offer your services to your king? Oh, I thank you, gentlemen; I thank you in the name of my

husband, of my children, and of our country! In these days of danger and distress, when all are wavering and fearful, it does my heart good to meet with unswerving fealty and devotion. Ah, so many have proved faithless and deserted us!"

"But so many also have remained faithful, your majesty," said Hardenberg, "so many have proved true and loyal!"

The queen gazed at him long and mournfully. "Few," she said, "alas, very few! You say so only in your magnanimity, because you do not care to make your loyalty appear as something extraordinary. But, look around in Prussia—look at our fortresses! Everywhere treachery and cowardice—everywhere perfidy! I will not speak to you of Stettin, of Küstrin, of Spandau, of Anclam, and Erfurt! You know already that we have lost them. But have you learned the dreadful tidings we received yesterday? Do you know that Magdeburg has surrendered?"

"Magdeburg!" ejaculated Stein and Hardenburg, at the same time.

Louisa nodded sadly, and her eyes filled with tears. "It was our last bulwark," she said, "and it is gone, too! I have wept much since yesterday. Now I will be calm, and force my grief back into my heart. But as Mary, Queen of England, said at the capture of Calais, 'If my heart were opened, you would find on it the name of *Magdeburg* in bloody letters!'" *

"It is true," said Hardenberg, gloomily, "it is a great disaster. A fortress so well supplied with every thing, and a garrison of more than ten thousand men!"

"If your majesty will permit me, I ask, how did this intelligence impress the king?" said Baron von Stein.

"He bore it with resignation, and that calm courage which never leaves him in these days of affliction," said Louisa, quickly. "But his so-called friends and advisers, Messrs. von Haugwitz, Köckeritz, Voss, and Kalkreuth, received the heart-rending news with secret satisfaction. I read it in their faces, notwithstanding the sadness they assumed. They regard the fall of Magdeburg as an ally of their intentions and schemes. They desire peace with France—peace at any price—and hope that the king will now approve their views. Hence, Minister von Stein, Madame von Berg had to give a letter to the courier yesterday, in which I urged you to comply with the king's orders, and to come here immediately. Hence, Count von Hardenberg, I am glad that you have come, too. Oh, I know very well what it must have cost your noble heart to come without being expressly requested; but you did so for the sake of the crushed and prostrate fatherland—I know it very well—and not for Prussia, not for us, but for Germany, on whose neck the tyrant has placed his foot, and which he will strangle unless the good and the brave unite their whole strength and hurl him off."

"I came here," said Hardenberg, "because I remembered that hour when your majesty permitted me to give an oath of unwavering fealty and devotion—that hour when you condescended to accept my hand for our league against France, and when you vowed to exert yourself to the best of your ability to maintain the policy Prussia had entered into, and not to suffer her king ever to accept the perfidious friendship of France!"

"I have never forgotten that hour," said the queen, gravely. "He who joined us in taking that pledge at the solemn moment you refer to, Prince Louis Ferdinand, has sealed his vow with his death: he is sleeping on the field of honor. But I feel convinced that he is looking down on us from heaven; and, if it be given to the spirits of the blessed to influence the affairs of mortals, he will instil his ardor into our breast, and assist us in reaching the true goal. But what is that goal? and what the true way? My short-sighted eye is not able to discern it. When I behold the tremendous successes of the conqueror, I am perplexed, and ask myself whether it be not evident that God will make him master of the world, and whether, consequently, it be not in vain to struggle against him? Oh, my soul is at times engaged in terrible conflict with itself, and gloomy doubts frighten it. But I feel now that we are on the eve of the crisis, and that the present day will decide our whole future. Grand-Marshal Duroc will reach this city to-day; Colonel von Rauch, who preceded him, has already arrived. He delivered to the king the treaty of peace, which M. de Zastrow and Lucchesini concluded with Talleyrand at Charlottenburg. Napoleon has already signed it. Only the king's signature is wanting, and, as soon as he affixes it, we are the friends and vassals of the emperor of France, and must either lay the sword aside, or, if he should command us to do so, draw it against Russia, our present ally. A stroke of the pen will determine the future of Prussia and the fate of my children. Now, help me and all of us!—now, advise me as to what ought to be done! Tell me your honest opinion as freely and sincerely as though you were standing before God! Count von Hardenberg, pray, speak first! Do you believe it to be necessary

* Louisa's own words.—Vide "Queen Louisa," p. 316.

for the welfare of Prussia, of my children, and, above all, of my husband, that the king should approve the treaty?"

"Your majesty is aware that I never advised the king to form an alliance with France," said Hardenberg, "and that my most sacred conviction will ever prevent me from doing so. But, in order to pass an opinion on the treaty of Charlottenburg, I ought to know its provisions, and your majesty is aware that the king has not permitted me of late to take part in the negotiations. I do not know what the treaty contained."

"Nor I either," said Baron von Stein, when the queen turned toward him with an inquiring glance. "But I know those who concluded it; I know that M. de Lucchesini and M. de Zastrow believe no sacrifice, no humiliation too great, if they can thereby succeed in making peace with France. I know that Talleyrand is wily enough to profit by their weakness, their cowardice, and lack of true honor; and I know, finally, that if Napoleon signs a treaty of peace with Prussia now, it cannot but be advantageous to him, and humiliating to Prussia."

"I will tell you what the treaty contains," said a grave voice behind them.

"The king!" exclaimed Louisa, rising quickly and hastening to him.

He greeted her cordially, and gave her his hand. "I wished to see you in your cabinet," he said, smiling, "and thus overheard the last words of the secret council which is held here."

Louisa blushed slightly; the king noticed it, and shook his head a little. "It is quite agreeable to me," he said, turning toward the two ministers, "that the queen informs herself of the state of our affairs and of politics generally, consulting men in whose loyalty and devotion she reposes confidence. We must know our fate accurately and thoroughly, in order to look it courageously in the face, and decide on such measures as are most conducive to our welfare. Moreover, the queen has hitherto bravely shared all our dangers and hardships; it is, therefore, but just that she should take part in our consultations."

"Oh, my king and husband," exclaimed Louisa, pressing his hand against her bosom, "I thank you for your kindness and generosity. I thank you for not sending me back into the narrow sphere of woman; for permitting me to look beyond the threshold of my apartments, and to have a heart for the calamities of our country."

The king nodded kindly to her, and then turned to the two ministers, who had respectfully withdrawn toward the door. "I invited you to come here, M. Minister von Stein," he said, "that you might participate in a meeting of the cabinet, at which our course in regard to the treaty of Charlottenburg is to be decided. I am glad that you have come. And," added he, addressing Hardenberg, "I am glad also that you are here. I like men who, conscious of their worth, are not irritated at being seemingly neglected. I know how to appreciate the fact that you are standing by us in these times of adversity, and not looking out only for your own quiet and comfort. I am fully aware that you are not pursuing this course from selfish motives, and that you are rich enough to live without any public position—richer, perhaps, than your king! Well, the queen requested you to give her your opinion about the treaty of Charlottenburg, and I came in and interrupted you."

"Your majesty heard that these gentlemen assured me they were ignorant of the contents of the treaty," said the queen, fixing her beaming eyes on the calm, grave face of her husband; "your majesty, on entering the room, were kind enough to say you would communicate the contents to us."

"I will do so, to keep the gentlemen posted," said the king—"not, however, as king, but as a friend, whom you, Louisa, will authorize to take part in the deliberations of this secret council of state. Hence, let us proceed without any regard to etiquette. I did not want to preside over, but merely to attend your consultation, and to tell you what you are ignorant of. Resume your seats, therefore."

"And you, dear husband!" asked the queen, sitting down again on the divan, "will you be so kind as to take a seat by my side?"

The king nodded, and sat down by her side, while the ministers took seats opposite. "Listen, then, to the terms of peace," said the king. "The Emperor Napoleon demands the whole territory situated on the right bank of the Vistula, from the point where the river enters the Prussian states, to its mouth. Besides, he demands the surrender of the fortresses of Kolberg, Hameln, Nienburg, Glogau, and Breslau; the cession of the whole of Silesia, on the right bank of the Oder, with the greater part of the section of this province lying on the left bank of that river. He, moreover, demands the city and fortress of Graudenz; he requires all the Prussian forces to withdraw to Königsberg and its environs, and that the Russian troops shall evacuate our states immediately. After all these conditions have been complied with in the most scrupulous manner,

either side is to be at liberty to resume hostilities ten days after giving due notice thereof." *

The queen, no longer able to suppress her agitation, uttered a cry, and turned toward her husband with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes. "And what does he offer us in return for all these humiliations?" she asked. "How is he going to reward us for selling to him our provinces, our fortresses, and our honor?"

"In return," said the king, slowly, laying stress on every word—"in return, he holds out to us the prospect of marching soon as his ally against Russia, and of supporting the Ottoman Porte. A second note, which Talleyrand drew up in the name of his master, and communicated to our envoy, was added. This note stated that, inasmuch as France, owing to constantly renewed wars, as well as her allies, Spain and Holland, had lost their most flourishing colonies in Asia and in the West Indies, and were compelled, for the fourth time, to fight in their own defence, justice and reason authorized the emperor to seek compensations on this side of the seas for the losses he and his allies had suffered, and to look for these compensations in those countries which, by virtue of his victories, he had the power to dispose of in such a manner as he deemed best. The greatest evil which Prussia had brought about by the last war, for which she alone was responsible, was the fact that the Ottoman Porte had been deprived thereby of its independence; for, owing to the insulting and threatening demands of the Emperor of Russia, two princes, who had been justly banished from the possessions of the Sultan, had been placed at the head of the government of the Danubian principalities, so that Moldavia and Wallachia were at present nothing else than Russian provinces. 'Accordingly,' concludes Talleyrand's note, 'so long as the Sultan should not have recovered the legitimate sovereignty over these provinces, the emperor would not consent to give up any countries which the fortune of war had placed in his hands, or which he might conquer hereafter.'" †

"That is to say," exclaimed the queen, passionately, "that Napoleon declares war against Russia, and, if we make peace with him, we must take up arms against that empire."

"That will be inevitable," said the king, composedly. "Besides this note, Talleyrand communicated some important information to our ambassadors. He told them that Napoleon, before setting out from Berlin, would issue a decree, absolutely prohibiting all commerce with England, and ordering, further, that all letters coming from or going to that country, addressed to an Englishman, or written in English, were to be stopped at the post-offices; that all goods, the produce of English manufactures, or of English colonies, were to be confiscated, not only on the coast, but in the interior, in the houses of the merchants by whom they should be retained; that every vessel, having only touched at the English colonies, or at any of the ports of the three kingdoms, should be forbidden to enter French ports, or ports under subjection to France, and that every Englishman whatsoever, seized in France, or in the countries under subjection to her arms, should be declared a prisoner of war.* Now," added he, in a subdued tone, "I have finished my communication. You know the treaty of peace, and every thing belonging to it. You will be able to form a definite opinion with regard to it; you can, accordingly, fulfil the queen's wish, and tell her whether you would advise me to sign it. Speak! and remember that here, in this room, I am not the king, but only the queen's friend, happening to be present at your consultation. It, therefore, behooves me to be silent, and to listen."

* Vide "Prussia in the Years 1806 and 1807"—a Diary, by H. v. Schladen, p. 57.

† "Mémoires d'un Homme d'État," vol. ix., p. 341.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SECRET COUNCIL OF STATE.

THE king leaned back, and, supporting his head on his arms, shaded his face with his hands, as if it were a screen that was to conceal the expression of his features. The queen turned with a sweet smile toward the two gentlemen. "My husband having permitted it," she said, "pray, speak. Let me hear your views. And as I deem the opinions of both of you equally important, I do not know whom to request to commence. Let the oldest speak first."

"Then, your majesty, I must speak," said Hardenberg, bowing low, "I know that I am seven years older than Baron von Stein. He surpasses me in wisdom as I do him in years."

"Well, speak," said Louisa. "What do you think of this treaty?"

"I think it is a new proof of the reckless pride of Bonaparte," said Hardenberg. "In order to appreciate it correctly it is necessary for us to look back into the past, and to remember how

* Thiers, "Consulat et Empire," vol. vii., p. 380.

this war arose, which the emperor asserts to have been provoked by Prussia. But the king, our most gracious master, never desired war; on the contrary, he withstood, for a long while, the wishes of his ministers, his court, his people, and his army. He would have avoided the war, if Napoleon had allowed him to form a Confederation of the North, conservative in its tendencies, but not hostile to the Confederation of the Rhine. Deceived, menaced, insulted, the king continued negotiating to the last moment, and did not cease hoping that France would acknowledge that she was wrong, and yield to the remonstrances and wishes of Prussia. The king was arming, it is true, but only for the purpose of supporting his just and strictly pacific demands by such a military demonstration. Compelled by Napoleon, he had to obey the dictates of honor at last and draw his sword. The fortunes of war decided against him; he was defeated. He commenced negotiating again; for the sake of the welfare of his people he submitted to the most rigorous terms which the conqueror imposed on him; but Napoleon, instead of appreciating this, became only the more arrogant and insatiable in his demands. The king's willingness to accept those terms was of no avail; the conditions which had been imposed on him were repudiated and nullified. Every new triumph, every new capitulation of a fortress, caused the emperor to render his demands more rigorous; and he dares now to offer a treaty, which would reduce the kingdom of Prussia to a single province—which could not but render the king's position even more precarious, and would be the depth of humiliation, without offering the least prospect of a speedy and lasting recovery from our past disasters. If Prussia should accept this utterly illusory compact, she would thereby deliver herself completely into the hands of an insatiable enemy, whose ambitious schemes are well known, and deprive herself of the only support still remaining. She would betray Russia and not save herself by this treachery, but only accelerate her own utter ruin. No one can dare to advise the king to sign such a paper, and, least of all, myself, after constantly opposing an alliance with France, even at a time when it would seemingly have been advantageous to Prussia. Your majesty ordered me to express my opinion, and I have done so to the best of my conviction."

The queen thanked him by a slight bow, and then turned toward Baron von Stein. "And you?" she asked, "will you communicate to me your views about this treaty which our envoys have already signed at Charlottenburg?"

"Your majesty," said Baron von Stein, quickly, "I lack the wise composure and smiling calmness of Count von Hardenberg. It was not given me to weigh the interests and the conduct of friends and foes with prudent tranquillity and magnanimous impartiality. I am no polished courtier, but only a blunt, upright German, and as such your majesty must allow me to speak to you. Well, my honest German heart revolts at what M. Napoleon is pleased to call a treaty of peace, and what, it seems to me, would be but a pact with degradation, dishonor, and disgrace. If I had been in the place of Messrs. de Zastrow and Lucchesini, I would have allowed my right hand to be cut off rather than to be prevailed upon to sign any thing so ignominious; I would have died rather than surrender at discretion in so humiliating a manner. I know full well that these gentlemen have done so only in order to save the political existence of the king and his state. But how little do they know the intentions and schemes of our powerful adversary, whom only the most determined and obstinate resistance can induce to be moderate in his exactions, and who, so soon as he has nothing to fear, shrinks from nothing! As soon as the king, according to these stipulations, has surrendered to him his fortresses and Silesian possessions, Napoleon will give notice that he resumes hostilities within ten days, and the king having not sufficient power to offer him any resistance, the loss of his last and only possessions would be the natural consequence. Napoleon would even manage matters in such a way as to leave it to other hands to carry out this last spoliation. It is well known what prospects he held out in Berlin to the deputation of the Poles, and by what words and promises he instigated them to rise. He now demands the removal of our troops from Graudenz and its environs, that is to say from Prussian Poland. He wishes to promote the insurrection in Poland, and to assist the Poles as efficiently as possible, so that we should lose these provinces during the cessation of hostilities. His majesty, moreover, is unable to enter into an engagement concerning the withdrawal of the Russian troops, and the last fortresses, therefore, would be sacrificed in vain. But it is just as little in the power of the king to induce the Emperor of Russia to waive his just claims against the Porte, or to deprive the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia of the protection pledged to them. The Russian emperor has already marched his troops into Moldavia. The struggle with the Porte has begun, and his honor will not permit him to recede from the stand he has taken. Up to this hour he has remained unwaveringly faithful, in words as well as in actions, to his Prussian ally. A large Russian

army is already approaching our frontier, and it is said the Czar himself is accompanying it in order to join the Prussian forces and then attack Napoleon. By signing the treaty of Charlottenburg, however, the King of Prussia would not only have to reject the assistance offered him, but be compelled to turn his sword against him who, in his generous friendship, is coming to help him fight for the preservation of his states.

"This so-called treaty of peace would raise up two new enemies against Prussia, and without changing her old foe, France, into a firm and reliable friend. The first of these is Russia, which Prussia would have deserted in the most perfidious manner; the second is Great Britain, which would wage war against the ally of France as well as against France herself. Napoleon, by that decree against English goods, property, and subjects, throws down a new gauntlet to Great Britain, for it is the beginning of a blockade of the entire continent; and William Pitt, the great and heroic minister of King George, will assuredly accept the challenge. It will kindle anew the whole fire of his hatred and vengeance, and he will urge the full power of England against France. Now, Talleyrand has declared loudly that Napoleon would allow Prussia to maintain her existence as an independent state, only if England and Russia should make peace with him on acceptable terms. Neither, however, will do this, and Prussia, consequently, would be irretrievably lost by accepting these conditions; for she would then have three enemies and not a single ally. Not only honor, but also prudence commands us to reject the treaty. Not to obey the dictates of those two powers would be to hurl Prussia into an abyss of wretchedness, where she would not hear the sympathetic lamentations of a single ally, but the scornful laughter of the world. I hope that the king may preserve Prussia from such consequences, and graciously permit us to maintain, amid our disasters and sorrows, a clear conscience and erect head, as it behooves men more willing to die than give up honor and liberty!

"Your majesty must pardon me if I have spoken too freely and unreservedly. But you commanded me to express my honest opinion. I have done so, and pray you to forgive me if my words have not been sufficiently delicate and well chosen."

"I have nothing to pardon, only to thank you," said the queen, "as well as Count von Hardenberg. Both of you have permitted me to look into the innermost recesses of your hearts. You have spoken according to your honest conviction: I thank you!" And turning her radiant eyes toward the king, Louisa added in a tone of profound emotion, "Your majesty, we have lost Magdeburg! But are not such men as these worth more than a fortress? Fortresses may fall, but so long as we shall have such men by our side, Prussia will not be lost!"

The king, who had been sitting all the while in the same attitude, his head supported on his arm, and his face hidden behind his hand, slowly dropped it and looked long and inquiringly at the queen. "It is your turn now to express your opinion," he said, calmly. "I believe you owe it to your advisers to tell them what you think of it. You thank those who speak to you honestly and truthfully, by answering them in the same manner. I, therefore, request the queen now to speak in her turn, and to tell us what she thinks of this treaty."

"I think, my king and husband, that I would rather be killed by the first cannon-ball discharged against France than sanction this ignominious treaty," exclaimed the queen, with glowing cheeks, and with passionate impetuosity. "I think that, in case you sign it, I should never dare to set foot again in the palace of Charlottenburg, because it would seem to me as though I were not allowed to raise my eyes either to man or to God, for the human heart turns away from the perfidious and dishonored, and God Himself has no mercy on them. I should think the walls of this house would fall upon us to hide our shame—I should shrink shudderingly from every table, because that treaty might have been signed on it which is to render us recreant to duty, and to steal our unsullied honor. No! let us be humiliated, and succumb with a clear conscience, rather than accept the friendship and alliance of the Corsican, at the expense of principle!"

"Ah!" muttered the king, bowing his head, "if words could be transformed into swords, you would win battles for me to-day. Unfortunately, however, soldiers are necessary for that purpose, and I have no army. Your words may be the dragon's teeth from which armed warriors may spring, but they might turn against ourselves and annihilate us!" He paused and looked down musingly. The queen dared not disturb his reflections, and gazed at him in silence and with an air of tender sympathy. The two ministers looked no less grave, and waited until he would interrupt the silence and address them.

The king raised his head and looked at the clock. "Four o'clock," he said, rising more hastily than usual. "I have ordered the ministers and generals to assemble at the rooms of

Minister von Haugwitz, and told them that I should be present. I like to be punctual. Let us go then, gentlemen; it is time for us to be at the conference."

The two ministers rose to take leave of the queen. Louisa gave each of them her hand, which they kissed, and she dismissed them with a grateful glance. The king kindly waved his hand, and, after they had left the room, turned to the queen. "Farewell, dear Louisa," he said, offering his hand to her; "official duties are calling me, and so long as I am king I must not neglect them. I came to you in order to dispel my cares a little by chatting with you, and instead of doing so I had to be present at a meeting of a secret council of state. The unfortunate have no time for recreation, and that may be useful and salutary, after all. Farewell, then; I must go to Haugwitz's rooms."

He was about to leave, but the queen grasped his hand, and gazed with an imploring glance searchingly at his calm and impenetrable countenance. "Oh, my husband," she said, in a voice tremulous with emotion; "you are going to leave me thus? You do not utter a word of consolation and assurance?"

The king kissed her on the forehead, and pointed to the clock. "It is high time for me to go to the conference," he said, and gently disengaging his hand hastened away.

Louisa gazed after him until he had disappeared; she then raised her hands and eyes to heaven. "O my God," she whispered, "direct his resolutions, and cause him to choose what is right! Oh, give me strength to bear my misfortunes patiently, and not to despair and murmur, even though the king should decide on another course than the one my heart longs for, and my reason believes to be right." On casting down her eyes, she happened to see the open piano, and hastening to it her white hands commenced playing a soul-moving melody. She then sang, with tearful eyes and fervent voice: "*Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten, und hoffet auf ihn alle Zeit—*"

Scarcely an hour had elapsed—the queen was still singing at the piano when the door behind her softly opened, and the king again entered. The carpet and the full notes of the piano prevented her hearing his footsteps. The king walked rapidly to his wife, and laid his hand on her shoulder. She started, and looked up to her husband with an inquiring, anxious glance, and rose slowly from her chair.

"Louisa," said the king, solemnly, "I have just returned from the conference of the ministers at Haugwitz's rooms. Besides Prince Henry and myself, ten ministers, generals, and cabinet councillors were present. Seven advocated the ratification of the treaty of Charlottenburg; four were opposed to it. The majority, therefore, were in favor of it."

The queen turned pale, and the painful quivering of her lips betrayed her inward emotion. "There were eleven present besides you," said she, breathlessly. "Seven voted for ratifying the treaty; four were opposed to it! But what did the king say, who had to decide every thing? Did my beloved husband side with the majority?"

"The king," said Frederick William, slowly, "decided in favor of the minority."

Louisa uttered a cry, and, seizing his hand, bent over and imprinted a warm kiss on it. "Oh, my dear husband, you did not accept the ignominious Charlottenburg bargain?" she asked, joyfully. "You did not yield to the majority? My God! I thank Thee, for Thou hast fulfilled the most fervent wishes of my soul! Oh, my dear husband, if there were in my heart still a spot which love for you had not consecrated, it would be now! My whole heart is filled with pride, delight, and esteem for you. We shall not make peace, then, with the tyrant, or accept the hypocritical friendship of our mortal foe—we shall remain faithful to ourselves, to our honor, and to our ally."

"Yes, we shall reject that treaty," said the king. "We shall try to carry on the war. But let us not yield to illusions; let us not endeavor to deceive ourselves by indulging in sanguine hopes! In again drawing the sword, we have to struggle for our existence, and we may possibly fail."

"Better to be buried under the ruins of the throne than to sit on it with the stigma of perfidy and dishonor!" exclaimed the queen. "Even the crown would not cover such a stain!"

"We may lose our state and our crown, and be compelled to flee as nameless beggars across the Russian frontier. Are you prepared for it?"

Louisa passionately encircled her husband's neck with her arms, and looked him in the face with an air of unutterable tenderness. "I am prepared for every thing, provided I may stay with you," she said, affectionately. "Let the worst befall us, it will find me calm and courageous, for I shall share it with you. Where you go I go. And though we should have to flee from our invincible enemy into the remotest wilds of Russia, my heart would be glad, for honor would accompany us, and love would be our comfort!"

The king laid his hand on her head, as if bless-

ing her, and clasped her in his arms. "You are a noble and heroic woman," he said, "and I thank God from the bottom of my heart for having given me such a wife. Pray for me, Louisa; pray for all of us! I will now go to receive the envoy of Napoleon, M. Duroc, and tell him that I must reject the treaty of Charlottenberg." He pressed a kiss on the queen's brow, and then crossed the room arm-in-arm with her. When about to go, he stood still and tenderly looked at her. "Ah, Louisa," he said, "I forgot to tell you something. After informing the conference that I should not ratify the treaty, but continue the war, I commissioned Haugwitz to draw up a manifesto by which I would announce to my people the step I had resolved upon. Count von Haugwitz, however, said he was unable to draw up such a manifesto, and offered his resignation, owing to his enfeebled health, and the disease of the eyes from which he is suffering."

The queen smiled, and an emotion of joy illuminated her countenance. "You have accepted his resignation?" she asked, breathlessly.

"I have accepted it. He will set out to-day for his estates. I must at once appoint his successor; for, in times such as these, I cannot do without a minister of foreign affairs. Can you recommend any one to me whom you would deem especially qualified for the position, and in whom you have confidence?"

The queen looked in surprise at her husband, and cast down her eyes, as if she feared he would read in them thoughts conflicting with her words. "It does not behoove me to advise my sagacious and prudent husband," she said. "His wisdom will always be able to find the right man for the right place, and to appoint a minister competent to promote the interests of Prussia and her noble king."

"Then you do not know of any one whom you would recommend to me?" asked he.

Louisa looked down, and silently shook her head.

The king smiled. "Well," he said, "in that case I myself must make the selection, and I have already done so. Baron von Stein is the man whom I will appoint minister of foreign affairs." He did not give his wife time to reply, but left the room quickly, and closed the door.

The queen gazed after him, her eyes radiant with joy. "Oh," she said, "what a great and noble heart! He who conquers himself is a hero indeed. The king has overcome his own reluctance, and, contrary to his inclination, selected the man whom his head appreciates, but whom his heart does not love."

CHAPTER XVIII.

BARON VON STEIN.

On the same day, after the king had given an audience to Grand-Marshal Duroc, and informed him that he rejected the treaty of Charlottenburg, he instructed Köckeritz and Beyme to offer the department of foreign affairs to Baron von Stein. But the baron had declined, declaring he was unable to fill so difficult a position—that he lacked the necessary knowledge of affairs and forms, and the requisite skill in applying them so as to discharge the duties of so high an office in an efficient manner. The king, however, did not accept this refusal. He caused new offers to be made to him—requesting him to take charge of the department at least temporarily, and promising him a large salary, besides eight thousand dollars annually for household expenses. But Baron von Stein did not allow himself to be tempted by the brilliancy of the position, or the large compensation. He adhered to his determination, and declined a second time, proposing to the king to appoint in his place, as minister of foreign affairs, Count von Hardenberg, that experienced and skilful statesman.

The king shook his head indignantly, and bit his lips, as he was accustomed to do whenever he was angry. "Tell Baron von Stein to come to me," he said to General von Köckeritz. "I will speak to him myself."

General von Köckeritz hastened away, and an hour afterward Baron von Stein entered the king's cabinet. Frederick William was slowly pacing his room, with his hands joined behind him. He apparently did not notice the baron's arrival, and passed him repeatedly without greeting or even looking at him. The minister, who at first had stood respectfully near the door, waiting to be accosted by the king, tired of this long silence, turned to the paintings hanging on the wall, and, while contemplating them, passing from one to another, happened to push against a chair, which made a loud noise.

The king was aroused from his meditation. He stood still before Baron von Stein, and looked with a stern air into his manly face. "I offered you twice the department of foreign affairs," he said, in his dry, abrupt manner. "Why did you not accept it?"

"Your majesty, because I did not feel capable of filling it," replied Stein, calmly, "and because there are worthier men who are better qualified for it."

The king shook his head. "Subterfuges!" he said. "Firm and bold men, such as you, do not undervalue their own importance, but appreciate it correctly. In days so grave as these, it is necessary for every one to be sincere. I want to be informed why you reject my offer. I have a right to insist on knowing your reasons. I am king still, and I believe my functionaries owe me an explanation when refusing to undertake a task which I ask them to perform. Speak, and tell me your reasons. I command you to do so."

"Your majesty," said Stein, with cold, proud equanimity, "suppose, in order to comply with your command, I should allege some pretext or other in lieu of my real reasons, and, like Count von Haugwitz, base my refusal on my pretended ill-health? How would your majesty be able to know whether I was sincere or not? Even kings are not capable of looking into the hearts of men, and no orders can reveal secrets if we desire to conceal them. But I do not wish to hide my thoughts from your majesty. In compliance with your request, I will lay my reasons freely and sincerely before you. But, before doing so, I must ask your majesty to grant me two things."

"Well, what are they?" inquired the king, quickly.

"In the first place, I beg leave to be seated, for I have been ill, and am still weak."

The king sat down on the divan and pointed to an easy-chair standing near. "Take a seat, and tell me your second request."

"I must beg your majesty graciously to pardon my frankness, in case my words should not meet with your approval or should appear too bold and rash."

"I wish to know the truth, and must, therefore, have the courage to hear it," said the king. "Why did you decline?"

"Your majesty, my first reason, though you refused to believe it, is and remains, that I regard Count von Hardenberg as much better qualified than myself to take charge of the department of foreign affairs, because he enjoys the confidence of those courts with which your majesty intends keeping up friendly relations. Count von Hardenberg, moreover, has the confidence of your people, who, wherever they are permitted to do so, are loudly expressing themselves in his favor, and would consider this salutary appointment a consolation and hope for the future. It seems unbecoming in me to accept an office that should be intrusted to a minister distinguished for his faithful services in this department, and, under the present circumstances perhaps, highly influential already by his very name."

"Go on, go on," said the king, impatiently. "Say no more about Hardenberg. Tell me your other reasons."

"Sire, my second reason is that, even though I accept the position, I should be unable to accomplish in it what I should deem necessary for the welfare of the state. Your majesty, so long as there is no free and direct intercourse between you and your ministers—so long as there is a cabinet government in existence, separating the king from his ministers, and exercising an injurious influence on the relations of the latter toward the subordinate officers in their departments, your ministers cannot hope to promote the welfare of the state, and to introduce and carry out such measures as they deem indispensable for the best interests of the people. Your majesty's ministers have long since recognized and felt the disastrous influence of this government, which is watching with the utmost jealousy at the door of your cabinet, and keeping every minister from it and from direct intercourse with you. They were silent so long as Prussia appeared to be in prosperous circumstances, and the inward germs of her degeneracy and decay could be concealed by a semblance of justice. But now every illusion of this character has been rudely dissipated, and it is time to beseech your majesty to abolish a system during the existence of which the calamitous condition of our state has constantly and hopelessly increased. Fearful events have followed in quick succession, and the Prussian states have been plunged into disasters from which they can be restored only by the united strength of the whole people. But although the ministers are fully conscious of this state of affairs, and though they hold in their hands the remedies that might save the kingdom, they never would be sure that they can profit by them, for they see between them and the king a power without any well-defined functions, and without responsibility, meddling with every thing and directing nothing—this power can foil the plans of the ministers at any time, reverse their measures, and counteract their advice."

"I know very well," said the king, angrily, "that, like Hardenberg, you are constantly on bad terms with Köckeritz, Beyme, and Lombard, the members of my cabinet."

"Sire, I do not attack persons, but privileges," said Stein, gravely. "If your majesty dismiss those gentlemen and select others, there would be no change for the better. If you do not permit the ministers to consult you directly concerning the affairs of their departments—if you do not rëestablish the council of state, and abolish the irre-

sponsible cabinet, the position of your minister of foreign affairs would remain as it is now—an empty shadow. But if your majesty should gather your ministers around you as a regular council of state, and direct their loyal plans and counsels with that fatherly love for your subjects which you have manifested at all times, such a step would strengthen the confidence of your allies, restore the courage of the oppressed nation, inspire the conquered provinces with the determination of shrinking from no danger in order to deliver themselves from the yoke of the oppressor, and counteract, in the countries remaining as yet intact, that discouragement which cannot but prevent the people from making any heroic efforts in self-defence. Such, sire," added Stein, drawing a deep breath, "are my honest opinions and convictions. I lay them before your majesty with the sincerity and earnestness which the threatening state of affairs renders it incumbent on me to manifest. My determination to share the fate of the monarchy, and of your majesty's house, whatever may be in store for them, is well known. But if you are unwilling to give up a system that I am satisfied has already brought so many calamities upon the country, and will continue to do so—if the cabinet is to remain, and if the council of state, without which I believe Prussia cannot be saved, is not organized—I most humbly beg your majesty to accept my refusal."

"You want to threaten me!" exclaimed the king. "You think, perhaps, you are alone able to save Prussia?"

"No, your majesty," said Stein, looking the king in the face; "no, I only believe that the present cabinet government is destined to ruin her."

The king looked down for a while musingly. "Well, what is your idea about the new council of state which you propose?" he asked after a pause. "Who is to belong to it? What is to be its object?"

"Its object is to be the intermediate voice between the people and the king; to lay before him the laws and ordinances, in order to obtain his approval and signature; to publish such of them as he has sanctioned, and to be responsible to him for the administration of the country. But for all these reasons it would be indispensable that the ministers should be admitted to the king at any time, and be consulted as to any resolutions which he would take and in reference to any changes he would decide upon in the general policy of the government. The ministers of foreign affairs, of war, and of finance, would form the nucleus of this council, and be as much as possible near the king's person. If your majesty should travel, one of them at least would have to accompany you."

"That is to say, you would depose me," said the king, a deep blush mantling his cheeks. "The ministers are to govern alone, and I am to have only the right of being a sort of writing-machine to sign their decrees."

"No, your majesty, the king is to have the deciding voice in regard to every thing; but he must graciously refrain from deciding any thing without having listened to the opinions of his ministers."

"And if I approve your proposition—if I assemble in my cabinet every day a council of state, consisting of the ministers," said the king, with seeming calmness, "would you then be inclined to accept the position I have offered you, and become minister of foreign affairs?"

"Sire," said Stein, firmly, "it would not be enough for your majesty to appoint new ministers, and hold daily consultations with them, but you would have also to dismiss, formally and forever, the gentlemen who have hitherto monopolized your confidence. Unless Count von Haugwitz and Lombard be dismissed from the civil service—unless Beyme, who is suspected by and disagreeable to the Russian court, and hated by a very large majority of our people, be deprived of his present office, the ministers cannot rely on any certain efficiency in their positions, and even the council of state would offer them no guaranty whatever against the continued secret cabinet consisting of Messrs. von Haugwitz, Lombard, and Beyme."

"Enough," exclaimed the king, rising hastily, and pacing the room. "I have listened to you to the end, because I wished to see how far your audacity would go, and to gain a clear insight into your whole character. I was already prejudiced against you. It is true, I knew you were a thoughtful, talented, and bold man, but, at the same time, I believed you to be somewhat eccentric; in short, I regarded you as a man who, because he always thinks only his own opinion to be correct, is unable to fill a position in which he would constantly come in conflict with others, and soon be irritated and discouraged by the clash of opinions prevailing there. I overcame these prejudices, because I have always striven to select the servants of the state, not according to the promptings of personal whims, but of sensible reasons. I was advised to appoint you minister of foreign affairs; and (please take notice of what I am about to tell you now) those who advised me to do so—those who advocated your appointment most

strenuously, were precisely the ones whom you are now attacking, and are bent upon overthrowing. I yielded! I offered you the department of foreign affairs. You declined the position on the pretext of not being familiar enough with the details of the department. Your refusal was greatly embarrassing to me, for I still believed that your services ought to be preserved to the state and to myself. I overlooked your ungracious refusal, and sent for you to speak freely and openly with you. I have conversed with you, and now know you better!"

The king, walking up and down, uttered these words with increasing excitement, and in a voice growing louder and louder, without looking once at Stein, who had risen from his seat, and, drawing himself up to his full height, listened to this angry outburst. The king stood still before him, and, fixing his piercing eyes on the calm, cold face of the baron, added, "I have found out, to my regret, that my original opinion of your character was not erroneous; that my prejudices against you were just, and that you ought to be considered an obstinate, refractory, and disobedent servant of the state, who, boastfully relying on his genius and talents, so far from aiming at the welfare of his country, is actuated solely by his whims, his passions, and personal hatred. Such men are precisely those whose conduct is most injurious to the interests of the monarchy."

"Your majesty," exclaimed Stein, impetuously, "your majesty, I—"

"Silence," ejaculated the king, in an imperious voice, "silence while I am speaking! I really feel sorry that you have compelled me to speak to you so plainly and unreservedly; but, as you are always boasting of being a truthful man, I have told you my opinion in unvarnished language, and will add that, if you should be unwilling to change your disrespectful conduct, the state cannot count very confidently of profiting further by your services."

"Your majesty, I cannot change my conduct," exclaimed Stein, pale with hidden anger, which he could no longer repress. "As you believe me to be an 'obstinate, refractory, and disobedient servant of the state, who, boastfully relying on his genius and talents, so far from aiming at the welfare of his country, is actuated solely by his whims, his passions, and personal hatred—'"

"Ah," interrupted the king, laughing scornfully, "you have an excellent memory, for I believe you are repeating my own words!"

"Sire, this will show you that my conduct is not always disrespectful, but that I set so high a value on your royal words that they are immediately engraved upon my memory," said Baron von Stein, smiling. "But, inasmuch as I am also of your majesty's opinion that such officials as you have described me to be are most injurious to the interests of the monarchy, I must request your majesty to accept my declination, and I hope it will be granted immediately."

"You have pronounced your own sentence, and I do not know how to add any thing to it!" replied the king.

Baron von Stein bowed. "I thank your majesty most humbly," he said. "Now I must beg that my dismissal from the service be communicated to me in the usual form. I have the honor to take leave of your majesty."

Without waiting for the king's reply, the baron bowed a second time, and left the room with measured steps. He crossed the anteroom rapidly, and then entered the apartment contiguous to the hall. A royal *valet de chambre* hastened to meet him. "Your excellency," he said, "the queen begs you to be so kind as to go immediately to her. She instructed me to wait here till your return from the king, and ordered me to announce you directly to her majesty."

"Announce me, then," said Baron von Stein, following the footman with a mournful air.

The queen was in her cabinet, and rose from her divan when Baron von Stein entered. She offered her hand to the minister with a smile. "I begged you to come to me," she said, "because I intended to be the first to wish you—nay, ourselves—joy of your new position. The king has informed me that he would intrust the office of Count von Haugwitz to you, and I tell you truly that this is as a beam of light for me in the gloom of our present circumstances. I know that you are a true and faithful patriot; that you have the welfare of Prussia, of Germany, and of our dynasty at heart, and that you have the will and the ability to help us all—this is the reason why I wish ourselves joy of—"

"Pardon me, your majesty, for daring to interrupt you," said Baron von Stein, in a low, melancholy voice; "but I cannot accept your congratulations. I was not appointed minister of foreign affairs, but the king has just granted my request to be dismissed from the service."

The queen started, and turned pale. "You did not accept the position which the king offered to you?" she asked. "Oh, then I was mistaken in you, too! There is, alas! no more fidelity or constancy on earth!" She pressed her hand against her aching forehead, and tottered back a few steps, to sink exhausted on the divan.

Baron von Stein approached, and his face seemed to be radiant with energy and determination. "No, queen," he said, loudly and firmly—"no; you were not mistaken in me, and if your majesty hitherto believed me to be a faithful and reliable man, I am sure you only did me justice. Fealty does not change, however, and he who has once been found reliable will be so forever. No; let me repeat once more, your majesty was not mistaken in me, although I rejected the position offered to me. I fearlessly and truthfully stated to his majesty the conditions on which alone I could accept it. The king was unwilling to submit to these conditions; he was angry at them and reproached me in such a manner as to leave me no choice but to present him my humble declination, which he granted immediately. I did not refuse his offer because the situation of the country frightened me, but because, above all, I had to remain faithful to myself, and obey the promptings of my conviction. My love, my fealty, my soul, belong to Prussia and the royal dynasty. I retire into obscurity, and shall wait for the voice of Prussia and of my king. When he calls me—when he can profit by services such as I am able conscientiously to perform—when he permits me to be faithful to myself and to my principles, that all my energy and faculties may be devoted to the welfare of my country, I shall gladly be ready to obey his call and enter upon those services. I would come to him, though from the most remote regions, and even should death menace me at every step. A true man does not shrink from danger or death, but from hypocrisy and falsehood, whether it concerns himself or others; he will not stoop to the tricks of diplomacy and dally with that which ought to be either forcibly removed from his path or carefully avoided, but with which he never ought to enter into compromise or alliance."

"Now I understand you," said the queen, gently and mournfully. "You did not wish to enter into an alliance with the secret friends of the French in our suite. The king was unwilling to sacrifice Haugwitz, Beyme, and Lombard to you, and hence you withdraw from the service. You did right, and it makes my heart ache to be compelled to admit it. So long as those three men are here, there will be a policy of continued vacillation and hesitancy, and what you would do one day those three men would annul the next. Oh! the king is so generous, so faithful and modest! He believes in the disinterestedness of Minister von Haugwitz, in his honesty and sagacity; for this reason, he will not altogether give him up, and he listens still to his advice, although Haugwitz is no longer at the head of the foreign department. Because the king himself is taciturn, and thinks and feels more in his head and heart than is uttered by his lips, Beyme's eloquence and quick perception fill him with respect; and because he is so very modest, and always believes others to be more sagacious than himself, he esteems Lombard's abilities highly, and wishes to preserve his services to the state. You know what I think of Lombard, and that at Stettin I was carried away by my anger at his conduct, more than was compatible with prudence. I caused the man to be arrested, whom I knew to be ready at that moment to betray me and the whole of Prussia, and whom I suspected of being in the pay of the French emperor. But you know also that my act was repudiated, and that immediate steps were taken to annul it. A special courier was sent to Stettin to procure the release of Lombard, and to convey him under a safe-escort to Küstrin; the messenger even took an autograph letter from the king to him, in which his majesty regretted the occurrence as arising from mere mistake. I do not tell you this in order to complain of it, but to show you how deep-rooted is the influence of those men, and how time is required to destroy it. But the time will come—believe me, it will—when Prussia will extend her hand toward you, and need your strong arm and firm will. Promise me that you will wait, and not give up to despair—that you will not enter the service of another monarch, so that, when Prussia calls you, you may be at liberty to respond."

"I promise it to your majesty," said Stein, solemnly. "I will wait; blessed be the hour when Prussia needs me, and when I shall be able to serve her again!"

"Yes, blessed be that hour!" exclaimed the queen, and, raising her eyes piously to heaven, she whispered, "God grant that it may come soon, for then a change in our circumstances will have taken place, and we shall have passed from present incertitude to firm determination. Oh, how much distress—how many disappointments and mortifications—until that change shall come! May we have strength to bear, and courage to overcome them!"

CHAPTER XIX.

THE QUEEN AT THE PEASANT'S COTTAGE.

It was a stormy night. The wind was howling through the pines, and driving the snow in dense clouds from the highway leading through the

forest. There was no sound save that of the winter's gale, and the trees groaning beneath its power. A solitary light, twinkling as a star through the dark woods, was shedding its beams on this desolate scene. It proceeded from a small house near the main road, where the forest-keeper had peacefully lived with his wife for more than twenty years. On the hearth in the cottage a merry fire was burning, and Katharine, the forest-keeper's wife, was industriously occupied with it, while the young servant-girl, seated on a low cane chair near the hearth, her hands clasped on her lap, had fallen asleep.

"Martha," exclaimed the old woman, in an angry voice—"Martha, are you asleep again?"

The girl opened her eyes lazily and yawned. "Why should I not sleep?" she asked. "It is time to do so, and every Christian has long since gone to bed. Let me also go to my bedchamber and sleep!"

"No, you must stay here," said Katharine, quickly; "I do not want to be alone in such a night. The wind is roaring in the chimney so fearfully that we might almost fancy Old Nick or the French were coming down to carry us away, or, at any rate, our last peace of bread and meat!"

"Meat!" ejaculated the servant-girl, laughing scornfully. "Old Nick, or even the French, would be unable to find any meat in your house. Would that I could only get the wages you owe me for the last six months, I should leave forthwith this miserable place, where one has so little to eat, and where it is so dreadfully tiresome!"

"You have not suffered hunger as yet, Martha," said the old woman, deprecatingly. "It is true, we have no meat left; the last ham we had has been consumed, and our last chickens had to be taken to town to be sold there—"

"And your husband has taken away your only cow," cried Martha, half angrily, half-sadly; "he is going to sell the good animal that always gave us such excellent milk and butter. I tell you it is a shame that he should do so, and I shall never go back to the stable where my dear cow's lowing will no more greet me!"

"You will, nevertheless, have to go back, Martha, for the two goats are still there; you must give them fodder, so that they may give us milk. They are all we have left! Do you think it did not grieve me to part with our fine cow which I had raised myself? I wept for her all last night, and would have given away my hand rather than sell her. But no one would have paid any thing for my old hand. We had to have money to pay your wages, so as not to be obliged to listen longer to your continued importunities. That was the reason why my good old man took the cow to town. It cut him to the quick to hear you dunning us all the time for a few dollars."

The servant-girl cast down her eyes and blushed. "I did not mean any harm, Mde. Katharine," she said, in confusion. "It was mere talk; I always hoped master would take a lesson from me and dun the count in the same manner for his own wages. But the great lords are living sumptuously, and do not care whether their servants are starving to death or not!"

"Our count, Martha, does not live sumptuously," said Katharine, heaving a sigh. "The French destroyed his palace, and—but hush! Did you not hear something outside? I thought I heard some one call."

The two women were silent and listened; but nothing was to be heard. The storm was howling, and rattling the windows. At times an iron hand seemed to pass across the panes—it was the snow which the wind lashed against the house as if intending to awaken the inmates from their slumbers.

"A terrible night!" murmured Katharine, shuddering. "I hope that my dear old man won't return in such a storm, but stop with one of his friends at the neighboring village. Heaven preserve any human being out in such a night as this on the highway, and from—"

A loud knock at the window-panes interrupted her, and a voice ouside shouted imperiously, "Open the door!"

The two women uttered a shrill scream, and Martha clung anxiously and with both her hands to Katharine's arm.

"I beseech you, Mde. Katharine," she whispered with quivering lips, "don't open. It is assuredly Old Nick or the French that want to come in!"

"Fiddlesticks! The devil does not wait for the door to open, but comes down the flue," said Katharine; "and as to the French, the *Parlez-vous*, why, they cannot speak German. Just listen how they are commanding and begging outside. 'Open the door!' Well, yes, yes! I am coming. No one shall say that old Katharine suffered people to freeze to death in the forest while she had fire on her hearth." Disengaging herself from Martha's grasp, she hastened to the door, and opening it quickly, said, "Whoever you may be, you are welcome!"

The storm rushed in with a terrible noise, driving the snow into the house, and blowing up the fire on the hearth into a still brighter blaze.

There appeared on the threshold a tall lady, wrapped in a dark velvet cloak, trimmed with fur; her head covered with a silken cape, to which a

white lace veil was fastened. Behind her were another richly-dressed lady, and two men in blue coats, splendidly embroidered with silver."

"You permit us, then, my dear woman, to enter your house and stop here overnight?" asked the veiled lady, in a gentle, sonorous voice.

Old Katharine stood staring at her. She felt as frightened as if a sorceress had entered her house. "First let me see your face," she said, growing bold notwithstanding her inward terror; "I must see who you are."

An indignant murmur arose among the attendants of the lady, but she ordered them to be quiet with a wave of her hand. She then turned once more to Katharine. "Well, my good woman, look at me," she said, drawing back her veil.

A pale, wondrously beautiful face was visible, and eyes more lustrous than the old woman had ever seen before, looked at her gently and kindly.

"Do you know me now?" asked the lady, with a smile full of touching melancholy.

"No," said Katharine, "I do not know you, but you are as beautiful as the angels that sometimes appear to me in my dreams, or as the fairies of whom my mother used to tell me when I was a little child. Come in, you as well as the others. There is room at the hearth for all who are cold."

The strange lady smiled and advanced into the cottage; before doing so, however, she turned around. "M. von Schladen," she said, in French, "pray, give orders to all not to betray my incognito. I am here the Countess von Hohenzieritz; please inform the servants of it."

The gentleman, who had just appeared on the threshold, bowed and stepped back. She and her companion approached the fire; the two servants, in their gorgeous liveries, stood in silence at the open door. The lady took off her fur gloves with a hasty motion, and held her small white hands toward the fire. A ring with large diamonds was sparkling on her forefinger. Old Katharine had never before seen any thing like it—she stood staring at the lady, and dreaming again of the fairy-stories of her childhood, while Martha sat on her cane chair as if petrified, and afraid lest the slightest noise should dispel the enchanting apparition.

"Oh, how pleasant this is!" said the lady, drawing a deep breath; "my hands were quite chilled. Countess Truchsess, come here and follow my example!"

The young lady, who was standing near in a silent and respectful attitude, approached the fire, and eagerly stretched her small hands toward it.

"How comfortable, is it not?" asked the lady who had styled herself Countess von Hohenzieritz. "Oh, after suffering from the cold a whole day, we learn to appreciate the boon of that fire which otherwise we fear as a dangerous element." And thoughtfully looking into the warm glow, she muttered to herself, "We are now wandering about in the cold, and are chilled; will no hospitable fire warm our hearts again?" She bent forward without uttering a complaint, or heaving a sigh.

Katharine could not avert her eyes; she gazed at the lady's sparkling jewels, and then looked at her face. Suddenly she noticed two diamond drops roll slowly over her transparent cheeks; but they were no diamonds like those flashing on her hands—they were tears. She shook them off with an impetuous motion, and turned to old Katharine, who, clasping her hands, asked herself wonderingly whether angels could weep.

"My good woman," said the countess, "will you permit us to stay here until daybreak? We have lost our way in the snow-storm. We thought to reach Königsberg before nightfall, but, I suppose, the city is yet quite distant?"

"Ten hours, at least," said Katharine, timidly. "You have lost your way, indeed—probably at the cross-roads, two miles from here. Instead of following the main one, you took the side-road. Well, such things may happen to the most skilful driver, in a snow-storm, when he cannot see his hand before him."

"I believe that such things may happen, and do not blame any one for what has occurred," said the countess, gently. "Tell me now, have you room and beds for all of us?"

"The two ladies may sleep in my bed, provided they occupy it together. But I have no others," said Katharine.

"I need no bed," exclaimed the younger lady, quickly; "I shall content myself with sitting at the fireside."

"And I," said M. von Schladen, who had just entered, "I beg leave to be allowed to pass the night in the travelling-coach."

"You will catch cold in the carriage, sir," said Katharine, "and there is danger, moreover, that, falling asleep, you might never wake again. But in the hay-loft it is warm and soft; you and the other gentleman may sleep there, if you please."

The Countess Hohenzieritz smiled. "Well," she said, "a high-chamberlain in a hay-loft! That is a melancholy adventure, I should think?"

"No, gracious countess, it sounds quite ludicrous," said the high-chamberlain, "and if only your——if only the gracious countess had a

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good bed, I should have no reason whatever for being melancholy. There are thousands nowadays sleeping on the hard ground, without a bunch of hay for a pillow!"

"Our dead of Jena and Auerstadt, for instance," said the countess, sighing. "But they are well: the dead sleep gently! At times I feel like envying them, for their rest is more peaceful than that of the living. Let us not murmur, but rejoice at having found shelter for the night! We shall remain, then, in this room, and the high-chamberlain will sleep in the hay-loft. But where shall we place our servants, and what is to become of our horses?"

"How many horses have you?" asked Katharine.

"Six horses and an outrider," said M. von Schladen.

"What!" exclaimed Katharine, in dismay. "Six horses! How extravagant in times so wretched as these, when the king himself would be glad to have two horses to his carriage, and—"

"Silence!" interrupted the high-chamberlain, in great excitement.

"You are right, my dear woman," said the countess, smiling. "The king will certainly be glad to have two horses left, especially if they always draw him in the right way. But it was no wanton arrogance on our part to take so many horses; we did so only on account of the bad roads, and in order to travel as rapidly as possible."

"Well, the horses can stand in the cow-stable and the wood-shed," said Katharine. "Go, Martha, light the lanterns, and show the coachman to the stable, and the gentleman to the hay-loft. I will make the bed for the ladies." And, drawing back the blue-striped linen curtains covering the large old family-bed, she muttered to herself: "It is very lucky that my old man has not come home; otherwise I should really be at a loss where to place my high-born guests."

Half an hour afterward tranquillity again reigned in the cottage. The horses, the servants, and the high-chamberlain, had been conducted to their quarters in the cow-stable, wood-shed, and hay-loft. Katharine and Martha had withdrawn to the servant-girl's small chamber, and on the lower floor, which served, at the same time, as a kitchen, hall, and sitting-room, a couch had been prepared for the two ladies. But the young Countess von Truchsess could not be prevailed upon to occupy one-half. She placed the cane chair against the high bedstead, and, sitting on it as on a tabouret at the foot of a throne, she supported her head on the cushions of the bed, over which the crimson satin blanket, lined with fur, that the ladies had wrapped around their feet in the carriage, had been spread. The Countess von Hohenzieritz was reposing on this, her noble form still wrapped in the fur robe, falling down to her feet in ample folds; her head was leaning back on the cushions, and the crimson of the blanket contrasted strikingly with her white cheeks and light-brown hair. She had clasped her small, slender hands on her lap; her large eyes looked upward in devotion, and her lips uttered fervent words, which no one heard and understood but He to whom they were addressed.

The fire on the hearth, to which large logs of wood had been added, continued blazing merrily; at times, when the wind came down the chimney violently, the flames rose high, and the beautiful figure in the miserable room was illuminated by the red light as by a halo. Her countenance was as pale and peaceful as that of the blessed dead, and yet an ardent vitality was beaming in her unclosed eyes. On the wretched bed in the peasant's cottage she was dreaming of her former happiness—of the magnificent days which she had seen, and which, she believed, would never return. But she did not bewail her departed glory, and her menaced welfare caused her no regret.

"Preserve to me, merciful God! the love of my husband," she whispered; "let my children grow great in name and in soul. Oh, if I could purchase happiness for them by sacrificing my life, I would gladly let my heart's blood ebb away drop by drop—if by my death I could restore to my husband his former power, how cheerfully I would die! O my God, save and protect Prussia: but if such should not be Thy will, teach us how to fall and die with her in an honorable manner! Preserve us from disgrace and despondency; teach us how to bear great disasters with dignified resignation, and grant that we may never be so faint-hearted as to sink beneath petty calamities!"

She paused, and looked upward with radiant eyes; just then the storm outside was howling with awful violence, and made the cottage tremble. "Such a storm without, and peace within! Let it always be so, my God," she whispered, gently pressing her hand against her breast. "O peace, sweet peace, when will it descend to us from heaven!" Gradually the words died away on her lips; her eyelids drooped. Heaven sent to her the brother of peace—sleep—that it might comfort her weary eyes and invigorate her after the troubles and exertions of the previous day. The storm continued all night long, but the

beautiful sleeper heard it only as a lullaby hushing her to sweet repose.

At daybreak there was a stir in the cottage. Katharine came to rekindle the extinct fire, and the two ladies rose, chilled and shuddering, to prepare for their journey. The travelling-coach, drawn by the six horses, rolled up to the door, and High-chamberlain von Schladen rapped timidly and begged leave to enter. The countess bade him come in, and replied with a sweet smile to his inquiries as to her night's rest. "I have slept," she said, "and feel sufficiently invigorated now to continue the journey."

"In four hours we shall be in Königsberg," said M. von Schladen. "It is a clear morning; the storm is over, and the sun will soon burst forth from behind the clouds."

"'The sun will soon burst forth from behind the clouds,'" repeated the countess, musingly. "Those are cheering words; could they but be fulfilled for all of us! Let us hasten to reach Königsberg; for there at least will be one sunbeam for me—I shall see my children again, and my husband also will join us on returning from the Russian camp."

M. von Schladen advanced a few steps, and said in a low and hurried voice: "The king is already in Königsberg. I have seen a peasant, the owner of this cottage, who has come from Königsberg. He walked all night, and left the city just at the moment when the king with his suite returned."

"And did the man bring other news?" asked the lady, hastily.

"A rumor was in circulation in Königsberg that the French were advancing from Posen, and, the Russian columns being also on the move, it was generally believed that a battle would soon take place."

The lady walked rapidly to the door. "Let us set out as soon as possible," she said; suddenly, however, she turned pale and leaned against the wall to prevent herself from falling.

"Oh," she murmured faintly, "what weak, pitiful beings we are, after all! The soul is strong enough to bear the heaviest burden, but the body is so weak that a twelve hours' fast is sufficient to overpower it!"

Just then Katharine entered the room; on seeing the lady looking so faint, she hastened to her, and asked sympathizingly for the cause of her pallor and exhaustion.

"I will tell you, my dear woman," whispered the lady, with a sad smile, "I am hungry!"

"Oh," sighed M. von Schladen, "and we have no refreshments with us!"

"But I have some for the beautiful lady," said Katharine, proudly. "I was right in thinking that high-born people must eat sometimes, and are not refreshed merely by their magnificent dresses and the splendor surrounding them, but are obliged to put something into their mouths, like us common people. Look, there is Martha with the breakfast!" And, in truth, Martha was just entering the door, holding in her hand a pitcher filled with fresh, smoking milk.

Katharine took an earthen cup from the shelf near the hearth, and filled it to the brim. "Now drink," she said, handing the cup to the countess; "it will strengthen you; it is splendid goat's milk, so fine and warm that city folks never get any thing like it; no fire warmed this milk, but God, who gave life and warmth to my dear goat. Drink, then, in His name!"

"No refreshment has ever been presented to me in so cordial a manner," said the countess, nodding kindly to the old peasant-woman. "I shall carefully remember your heart-felt words, and drink the milk in the name of the good Lord, but only provided you, Countess Truchsess, and you, too, M. von Schladen, can likewise have a cup of this splendid milk."

"We shall have some," said the Countess von Truchsess; "please your——, the gracious countess will please drink her milk." The countess placed the cup on the window-sill without having touched it with her lips. "You see I am waiting," she said—"make haste!" She herself then hastened to the cupboard near the hearth, and took from it two small earthen jars, which she handed to Katharine to fill with milk.

"And have you not something to eat with the milk, my dear woman?" asked M. von Schladen, in a low voice.

"I have but a loaf of stale brown bread," said Katharine, "but I am afraid it will be too hard for the fine teeth of the countess."

"Give it to me at all events," said the countess, "my teeth will be able to manage it."

Old Katharine took a large loaf of bread from the cupboard, cut off a thick slice, and presented it on the bright pewter plate, the principal ornament of her house. The countess broke off a piece, and, leaning against the window, commenced eating her frugal breakfast.

The Countess von Truchsess and the high-chamberlain had retired to the hearth to partake of the strange and unwonted food. Katharine and Martha stood at the door, staring admiringly at the lady who was leaning against the window, and just lifting the stale brown bread to her mouth. She did not notice that the two were looking at her; she was gazing thoughtfully at

the large bedstead in which she had passed the night in tears and prayers. Her glance then turned to the piece of bread which she held in her hand, and from which she had vainly tried to eat. The bread and the bed reminded her of an hour long past, when she was a happy queen—an hour when her mental eye descried the future, and the words of a beautiful and melancholy song aroused in her anxious forebodings, and seemed to her a prophecy of her own destiny. As she thought of those golden days, her eyes filled with tears, which rolled over her cheeks and trickled down on the bread in her hand. "Oh," she murmured, "now I shall be able to eat it; I am softening it with my tears!" And to conceal them she averted her head, and looked out at the forest, whose lofty pines were adorned with snow-wreaths. Her tears gradually ceased—she drew the large diamond ring from her finger, and, using the pointed stone as a pen, wrote rapidly on the window-pane.

Old Katharine and Martha stared at her in dismay; the characters appearing on the glass filled them with astonishment and superstitious awe, and they thought the handsome lady who knew how to write with a precious stone might after all be a fairy, who, persecuted by some evil sorcerer, had fled thither into the dark forest, and was writing some exorcising words on the window-pane, lest her enemy should pursue and have power over her.

The lady replaced the ring on her finger, and turned to the young countess and the high-chamberlain. "Now, I am ready," she said, "let us set out." She walked to the door, and shaking hands with old Katharine, thanked her for the hospitable reception she had met with in her cottage, and then stepped out of the low door for the carriage, at which the high-chamberlain was awaiting her.

"I beg leave, gracious countess, to take upon myself the functions of our outrider. The road is broken and full of holes, and as I have a keen eye, I shall see them in time, and call the attention of the coachman to them."

The countess thanked him with a kind glance. "I accept your offer," she said—"may a time come when I shall be able to thank my faithful friends for the attachment and devotion they manifest toward me during affliction, and which are engraven in diamond letters on my heart! But let us thank the good woman who received us so hospitably last night. I request you to give this to her in my name." She handed her purse filled with gold-pieces to the high-chamberlain, and entered the carriage. M. von Schladen stood still until the carriage rolled away. Before mounting he hastened into the house.

Old Katharine and Martha stood in the room, and were looking in silent astonishment at the neat characters on the pane, the meaning of which they were unable to decipher. "Oh, sir," exclaimed Katharine, when the high-chamberlain entered the room, "tell us the meaning of this—what did the lady write here?"

M. von Schladen stepped to the window. When he had read the lines, his eyes filled with tears, and profound emotion was depicted in his features. "Enviable inmates of this humble cottage," he said, "from this hour it has become a precious monument, and, when better times arrive, the Germans will make a pilgrimage to this spot to gaze with devout eyes at this historical relic of the days of adversity. Preserve the window carefully, for I tell you it is worth more than gold and diamonds."

"Is it really, then, an exorcism which the beautiful fairy has written there?" asked Katharine, anxiously.

"Yes, those are magic words," replied M. von Schladen, "and they read as follows:

'Who never ate his bread with tears—
Who never in the sorrowing hours
Of night lay sunk in gloomy fears—
He knows ye not, O heavenly powers!'"*

"Ah, she ate her bread with tears to-day. I saw it," murmured Katharine. "But who is she, and what is her name? Tell us, so that we may pray for her, sir."

"Her name is Louisa," said M. von Schladen, in a tremulous voice. "At present she is a poor, afflicted woman, who is fleeing from town to town from her enemy, and eating her bread with tears, and weeping at night. But she is still the Queen of Prussia, and will remain so if there be justice in heaven!"

"The Queen of Prussia!" cried Katharine, holding up her hands in dismay. "She was here and wrote that?"

"Yes, she wrote that, and sends this to you as a reward for your trouble," said M. von Schladen, emptying the contents of the purse on the table. The purse itself he placed in his bosom. Without waiting for the thanks of the surprised woman, he departed, vaulted into the saddle, and followed the queen at a full gallop.

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* "Wer nie sein Brot mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, Ihr himmlischen Mächte."
GÖTHE.

CHAPTER XX.

COUNT PUCKLER.

PERFIDY and treachery everywhere! Magdeburg, Küstrin, the most important fortresses of Prussia, had fallen. Not only the hand of the triumphant conqueror had brought about their downfall, but the timidity and cowardice prevailing among the Prussians themselves. Magdeburg, although abundantly supplied with ammunition, and garrisoned by more than ten thousand men, had surrendered. Küstrin, Hameln, and a large majority of the other fortresses, had voluntarily capitulated, almost without a show of resistance, on receiving the first summons to surrender; the first cities of Prussia were now French; the French were lawgivers everywhere, and the humiliated Prussians had to bow to the scornful arrogance of the victors.

Still, there were at this time of sorrow and disgrace shining examples of courage, of bold energy, and unwavering fidelity—there were fortresses that had not voluntarily opened their gates to the enemy, and that, regardless of hunger and privation, were struggling bravely for honor and victory. As yet Colberg had not fallen; this fortress was courageously defended by Scharnhorst, the skilful and experienced colonel, by bold Ferdinand von Schill, and that noble citizen, Nettelbeck, who by word and deed fired the hearts of the soldiers and citizens to persist in their patient resistance and in the determined defence of the place.

Graudenz had not surrendered to the besieging forces. The commander of this fortress, M. de Courbières, had not yielded either to the threats or the flatteries of the enemy. "If it be true, as you assure me, that there is no longer a King of Prussia, I am King of Graudenz, and shall not surrender," he replied to the bearer of the French flag of truce, who summoned him in the name of the Duke de Rovigo to capitulate.

Silesia also had remained faithful, notwithstanding the action of Minister Count Hoym, who, in a public manifesto, had called upon the Silesians to meet the foe in the most amicable manner in case of an invasion, and to satisfy as much as possible all the demands of the hostile troops. The Silesians, more courageous and resolute than their minister, were unwilling to bend their necks voluntarily under the French yoke; they preferred to struggle for their honor and independence. It is true, the fortress of Glogau had fallen, but Breslau and Schweidnitz were still holding out. Twice had Breslau repulsed Jerome Bonaparte with his besieging troops—twice had the determination of the courageous in the place triumphed over the anxiety of the timid and of the secret friends of the French. At the head of these bold defenders of Breslau was a man whose glorious example in the hour of danger had inspired all—infused courage into the timid, and brought comfort to the suffering. This man was Count Frederick von Pückler. He did not take time to recover from the wounds he had received in Jena. Faithful to his oath, he devoted his services to his country, that stood so much in need of its sons. After a short repose on his estate at Gimmel, he repaired to the headquarters of King Frederick William at Ortelsburg. It is true, he could not bring him a regiment, or any material help; still he was able to assist him with his ideas, and to show him the means of obtaining efficacious help.

Count Frederick von Pückler believed the king might derive assistance from the military resources of Silesia. He described to him, in ardent and eloquent words, the extensive means of defence retained by this rich province; he assured him its inhabitants were faithful and devoted, and ready to shed their blood for their king. He told his majesty, freely and honestly, that the old civil and military bureaucracy alone was to blame—that Silesia had not long an organized effective system of resistance—that this government had paralyzed the patriotic zeal of the citizens, instead of stimulating it—nay, that, by means of its insensate and ridiculous decrees, it had impeded in every way the development of the military resources of the province. He had not come, however, merely to find fault and to accuse, but, in spite of his sickness and his wounds, performed the long journey to the king's headquarters in order to indicate to his sovereign the remedies by which the mischief might be counteracted, and the country preserved from utter subjugation. He communicated a plan by which new forces might be raised, and be enabled to take the field in a few days. All the old soldiers were to be recalled into the service; the forest-keepers and their assistants were to be armed, and from these elements the *landwehr* was to be organized, and, intrusted with the special task of defending the fortresses.

The king listened to the ardent and enthusiastic words of the count with growing interest, and finally Pückler's joyful confidence and hopeful courage filled him also with hope and consolation.

"You believe then that we could really obtain, by these new levies, brave troops for the defence of the fortress?" asked he.

"I am convinced of it," replied Count Pückler. "Ardent love for their fatherland and their king is glowing in the hearts of the Silesians, and they will be ready when called upon to defend the fortresses. Hitherto, however, nobody has thought of appealing to the able-bodied men. Count Hoym has retired to the most remote part of Silesia, and is now wandering about from city to city. The military governor of Silesia, General Lindener, visited all the fortresses and told their commanders that every thing was lost—that it only remained for them to protect themselves against a *coup de main*, so as to obtain good terms on their surrender."

The king started up, and an angry blush mantled his face for a moment. "If he said that, he is an infamous scoundrel, who ought to lose his head!" he exclaimed, vehemently.

Count Pückler smiled mournfully. "Alas!" he said, "your majesty would have to sign many death-warrants if you punish in these days of terror all who are wavering because their faith and hopes are gone. Possibly, only an admonishing, soul-stirring word may be required to invigorate the timid, and to encourage the doubtful. Sire, utter such a word! Send me back with it to Silesia! Order the governor to accept the propositions which I had the honor to lay before your majesty, and which I have taken the liberty to write down in this paper, and instruct him, in accordance with them, to garrison the fortresses with fresh defenders. Oh, your majesty, all Silesia is yearning for her king; she is longingly stretching out her hands toward you: permit her to fight for you!"

"You imagine, then, that Schweidnitz, and, above all, Breslau, in that case, would be able to hold out?" asked the king.

"I do not imagine it, I am convinced of it!" exclaimed the count. "I pledge my life that it is so; I say that Breslau, permitted to defend itself, would be impregnable; I am so well satisfied of it that I swear to your majesty that I will die as a traitor if I should be mistaken. Sire, send me to Breslau—permit me to participate in the organization of the new levies, and to arouse the zeal and energy of the authorities, and I swear to your majesty the Silesian fortresses shall be saved!"

"Well, then, I take you at your word," said the king, nodding kindly to the count. "I will send you to Breslau. Wait; I will immediately draw up the necessary orders." The king went to his desk and hastily wrote a few lines. Count Pückler stood near him, and smilingly said to himself, "I will defend Breslau as Schill is defending Colberg! Both of us, therefore, will fulfil the oath we have taken!"

"Read!" said the king, handing him the paper —"read it aloud!" Count Pückler read:

"The enclosed proposition of Count Pückler to reënforce the garrisons of the Silesian fortresses deserves the most serious and speedy consideration. Hence, I order you to carry it out without delay, and to save no expense in doing so. The fortresses must be defended at any price, and to the last man, and I shall cause such commanders to be beheaded as fail to do their duty.

"FREDERICK WILLIAM."

"Are you satisfied?" asked the king, when the count had finished.

"I thank your majesty in the name of Silesia," said the count, solemnly. "Breslau will not fall into the hands of the enemy. I pledge you my head that it will not. I now request your majesty to let me withdraw."

"When do you intend to set out?"

"This very hour."

"But you told me you had arrived only an hour ago. You ought to take rest till to-morrow."

"Your majesty, every day of delay exposes your Silesia to greater dangers. Permit me, therefore, to set out at once."

"Well, do so, and may God be with you!"

The king gazed after the count with a long, musing glance. "Oh," he sighed, mournfully, "if *he* had been commander of Magdeburg, it would be mine still!"

Count Pückler hastened back to Silesia with the king's written order. He visited all the fortresses and saw all the commanders. The king, to give more weight to the count's mission, had instructed the provisional authorities and the chief executive officers of the districts, in a special rescript, to gather the old soldiers at the headquarters of the recruiting stations; he had ordered all the commanders to confer personally with Count Pückler as to the best steps to be taken for the defence of the fortresses, by the addition of the new soldiers and riflemen to the regular garrisons.

Count Pückler, therefore, had accomplished his purpose; he was able to assist his country and to avenge himself for the disastrous day of Jena. A proud courage animated his heart; his eye was radiant with joy and confidence; his face was beaming with heroic energy. All who saw him were filled with his own courage; all who heard him were carried away by his enthusiasm, and gladly swore to die rather than prove recreant to the sacred cause of the country. Every one in Breslau knew Count Pückler, and confided in him.

Always active, joyous, and indefatigable, he was to be found wherever there was danger; he encouraged the soldiers by standing at their side on the outworks, by toiling with them, and exposing himself to the balls which the enemy was hurling into the city. He maintained the enthusiasm of the citizens by patriotic speeches, so that they did not despair, but bore their sufferings patiently, and provided compassionately for the men standing on the ramparts in the storm and cold, in the face of an uninterrupted artillery-fire. A generous rivalry sprang up among the citizens and soldiers: the former contributed all they had to provide the troops with food and comforts of every description; and the latter vowed in their gratitude to fight as long as there was a drop of blood in their veins, and not suffer the inhabitants, in return for the privations they had undergone, and for the sacrifices they had made, to be surrendered to the tender mercies of the enemy. But this enthusiasm at last cooled. Every one would have borne days of privation and suffering courageously and joyously enough, but long weeks of anxiety and distress deadened the devotion of the besieged.

"Every thing is going on satisfactorily," said Count Pückler, on coming to the governor of the fortress, General Thile, on the morning of the 30th of December. "We shall hold out till the Prince von Pless, who has lately been appointed by the king governor-general of Silesia, arrives with his troops to succor us and to raise the siege of Breslau."

The governor shrugged his shoulders. "There will be no succor for us, and every thing will turn out wrong," he said.

"But the soldiers are faithful, and the citizens do not waver as yet."

The governor looked almost compassionately at the count. "You see none but the faithful, and hear none but the undaunted," he said. "I will show you the reverse of your bright medal!" He took a paper from his desk and beckoned the count to approach. "Just look at this; it is the morning report. Do you want to know how many soldiers deserted last night? Over a hundred, and in order to put a stop to further desertions, the countersign had to be changed three times."

"The deserters are the perfidious, treacherous Poles!" exclaimed Pückler, angrily.

"Yes, the Poles were the first to desert, and, unfortunately, more than half the garrison consists of Poles. They are the old soldiers who were organized in accordance with your proposition, my dear count. They are yearning for home, and long to obtain, in place of the scanty rations they receive here, the fleshpots which the Emperor Napoleon has promised to happy Poland."

"But they need not starve here; they are provided with sufficient food," exclaimed Pückler. "Only yesterday I saw a subscription-paper circulating among the citizens for the purpose of raising money to furnish the men on duty on the ramparts with meat, whiskey, and hot beer."

"How many had signed it?"

"More than a hundred, general."

"Well, I will show you another subscription-paper," said the governor, taking it from his desk. "A deputation of the citizens were here last night and presented this to me. It contains a request to give them, amidst so many sufferings, the hope of speedy succor, lest they be driven to despair. Over two hundred signed this paper. I could not hold out any hopes, and had to dismiss them without any consolation whatever."

"But succor will come," exclaimed Pückler.

"It will not come," said the governor, shrugging his shoulders.

At that moment the door opened, and an orderly entered. "Lieutenant Schorlemmer, in command of the forces at the Schweidnitz Gate, sent me here," he said. "He instructed me to inform the governor that the firing of field and siege artillery was to be heard, and the village of Dürgoy was burning!"

"The enemy is manœuvring, and, no doubt, set the village unintentionally on fire. Tell Lieutenant Schorlemmer that is my reply."

No sooner had the orderly withdrawn than the officer in command of the engineers entered the room. "Your excellency," he exclaimed, hastily, "I have just come from the Ohlau Gate. The enemy is hurrying with his field-pieces and many troops from the trenches toward the Schweidnitz road, and the firing that began an hour ago is gradually approaching the fortress."

"The succoring troops are drawing near," exclaimed Count Pückler, joyfully. "The Prince von Pless at the head of his regiments has attacked the enemy!"

The governor cast an angry glance on the rash speaker. "It is true you know all these things a great deal better than old, experienced soldiers," he said; "you will permit me, however, to be guided by my own opinion. Now, I think that the enemy is only manœuvring for the purpose of decoying the garrison from the city. We shall not be so foolish, however, as to be caught in such a manner. But I will go and satisfy myself about this matter. Come, Mr. Chief-Engineer, and accompany me to the Ohlau Gate. And you, Count Pückler, go to General Lindener to ascer-

tain his opinion. He has good eyes and ears, and if he view the matter in the same light as I do, I shall be convinced that we are right."

Count Pückler hastened away, and while the governor, with the chief-engineer, was walking very leisurely to the Ohlau Gate, Pückler rushed into the house of General Lindener, determined to make the utmost efforts to induce the governor to order a sally of the garrison. But General Lindener had already left his palace and gone to the Taschen bastion for the purpose of making his observations. Count Pückler followed him; he could make but slow headway, for the streets were densely crowded; every one was inquiring why the enemy had suddenly ceased shelling the city.

Count Pückler rushed forward toward the Taschen bastion, and the constantly increasing multitude followed him. General Lindener stood amidst the superior officers on the rampart of the Taschenberg. He was scanning the horizon with scrutinizing glances. The officers now looked at him in great suspense, and now at the open field extending in front of them. Count Pückler approached, while the people, who had almost forcibly obtained admission, advanced to the brink and surveyed the enemy's position. The crowd, however, did not consist of vagabond idlers, but of respectable citizens—merchants and mechanics—who wished for the consolation the governor had refused them—the hope of succor! Gradually their care-worn faces lighted up. They saw distinctly that the enemy had left the trenches. Here and there they descried straggling French soldiers running in the direction of the fight in front of the fortress. They heard the booming of artillery and the rattling of musketry, and they beheld the shells exchanged between the opposing troops, exploding in the air. Keen eyes discovered Prussian cavalry in the neighborhood of the Jewish burial-ground, near the Schweidnitz suburb, and at this sight tremendous cheers burst from the citizens.

"Succor has come!" they shouted. "The Prince von Pless is coming to deliver us!"

All now looked to the general, expecting he would utter the decisive word, and order the garrison to make a sortie. But this order was not given.

General Lindener turned with the utmost composure to his officers. "I have no doubt," he said, "that the enemy is merely manœuvring for the purpose of drawing us out of the fortress. It is an ambush in which we should not allow ourselves to be caught."

"Your excellency," exclaimed Pückler, in dismay, "it is impossible that you can be in earnest. That is no manœuvre; it is a combat. The long-hoped-for succor has come at last, and we must profit by it!"

"Ah," said the general, shrugging his shoulders, "you think because his majesty permitted you to participate in organizing the defence of the city, and to confer with the commander in regard to it, you ought to advise everywhere and to decide every thing!"

"No; I only think that the time for action has come," exclaimed Count Pückler. "Opinions and suppositions are out of the question here, for we can distinctly see what is going on in the front of Breslau. I beg the other officers to state whether they do not share my opinion—whether it is not a regular cannonade that we hear, and a real fight between hostile troops that we behold?"

"Yes," said one of the officers, loudly and emphatically—"yes, I am of the same opinion as Count Pückler; there is a combat going on; the Prince von Pless is approaching in order to raise the siege."

"That is my opinion too!" exclaimed each of the officers, in succession; "the succoring troops have come; the enemy has left the trenches in order to attack them."

"And as such is the case," exclaimed Count Pückler, joyfully, "we must make a sortie; prudence not only justifies, but commands it."

"Yes, we must do so!" exclaimed the officers. The citizens standing at some distance from them heard their words, and shouted joyously: "A sortie, a sortie! Succor has come! Breslau is saved!"

General Lindener glanced angrily at the officers. "Who dares advise the commanding general without being asked?" he said, sharply. "None of you must meddle with these matters; they concern myself alone, and I am possessed of sufficient judgment not to need any one's advice, but to make my own decisions!" With a last angry glance at Count Pückler, he left the bastion to return to his palace. Governor Thile was awaiting him there, and the two ascended to the roof of the building to survey the environs.

The fog, which had covered the whole landscape until now, had risen a little, and even the dim eyes of the general and of the governor could not deny the truth any more. A combat was really going on. The smoke rising from the ground, and the flashes of powder from field-pieces, were distinctly to be seen. It was a fact: succor was at hand; a Prussian corps was approaching the city. The two generals left the roof, arm-in-arm, in silence, absorbed in their re-

flections, and descended to the ground-floor, where a luncheon had been served up for them. An hour later, they assembled the garrison, in order to make an attack, "in case the enemy should be defeated!"

But it seemed as if the enemy had not been defeated. The firing in front gradually died away; the sally did not take place, and in the evening the French recommenced throwing red-hot shot into the city.

"We have been betrayed," murmured the citizens, as they despondingly returned to their homes.

"The general did not want to make a sortie—he had no intention to save Breslau," groaned Count Pückler, when he was alone in his room. "All is lost, all is in vain! The wish of the timid sacrifices our honor and our lives! Oh, my unhappy country, my beloved Prussia, thou wilt irretrievably perish, for thy own sons are betraying thee! Thy independence and ancient glory are gone; conquered and chained, thou wilt prostrate thyself at the feet of the victor, and with scorn he will place his foot upon thy neck, and trample thy crown in the dust! I shall not live to see that disgrace! I will fulfil my oath, and, not being able to save my country, I must die with it! But not yet! I will wait patiently, for there is a faint glimmer of hope left. The Prince von Pless may make another attempt to raise the siege, and the citizens and soldiers may compel General Lindener to order an attack, and not to surrender. That is my last hope."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PATRIOT'S DEATH.

GREAT excitement reigned in the streets of Breslau on the following day. The people were standing in dense groups, and each of them was addressed by speakers, who recapitulated the sufferings that had already been undergone, and the agony in store for them if the city should persist in its resistance.

"Who will dare to resist the Emperor Napoleon and his army?" exclaimed one. "We were audacious enough to do so, and what has become of us! Our houses have been demolished—our money is gone—our sons, brothers, and fathers, have been crippled or killed! When Napoleon once stretches out his hand toward a country, and says, 'I will have it!' it is useless to resist him, for he always accomplishes what he intends. God or the devil has given him the power to do so!"

"Why torment ourselves by further efforts?" cried another. "We shall have to submit. Heaven itself is against us. See the ice-crust on the Oder. This cold weather is a fresh ally of the French! So soon as the Oder and the ditches are firmly frozen over, they will cross, and take the city by assault. Of course, we shall be required again to risk our lives in breaking the ice amid bullets and shells. The only question is, whether you will do so."

"No! no!" shouted the crowd. "We have suffered enough! We will neither break the ice in the Oder, nor extinguish the numerous fires. Too many of our countrymen have fallen already; it is time for us to think of saving the lives that remain!"

"No!" cried a powerful voice—"no! it is time for you to think of saving your honor!"

"Count Pückler!" murmured the people, looking at the tall, imperious man, who had mounted the curb-stone at the corner of the market-place, and cast angry glances on the crowd.

"Will you listen to me?" asked the count, almost imploringly.

"Yes, yes," exclaimed a hundred voices, "we will listen to you!" And all approached and encircled him.

"Now speak, count," said one of the men, standing closest to him. "We know that you are a good patriot, and a noble friend of the people. Tell us what we ought to do. Tell us whether you think that there is hope for us!"

"There is," replied Count Pückler. "There is hope of succor."

"Ah, succor will not come," cried the people, scornfully, "and though it should, the generals would act again as if they could not see any thing, keep the gates shut, and fail to make a sortie. Speak of other hopes that you think are still left to us, count!"

"Well, there is the hope that the weather will relax—that the Oder and the ditches will not freeze, and that the enemy, consequently, will be unable to cross them. By bombardment alone Breslau cannot be taken. Our fortifications will resist the enemy's artillery a long while; and, if you do not waver, but struggle on bravely, you may preserve to your king his most beloved province and one of his best fortresses. Think of the honor it would reflect on you if the whole world should say: 'The citizens of Breslau preserved to their king the great capital of Silesia! During the days of danger and distress they hastened fearlessly to the ramparts, not only to carry food

and refreshments to the defenders, but to transform themselves into soldiers, to man the guns, and hurl balls at the enemy!'"

"Yes, yes, we will do so! That will be glorious!" shouted the men, and their eyes flashed, and they lifted up their arms as if they were grasping their swords. "Yes, we will march out to the ramparts—we will become brave soldiers, and fight for our city and for our king!"

"And you will lose your limbs," cried a sneering voice from the crowd; "you will be crippled—die of hunger—ruin yourselves and your children; and it will be in vain, after all! You will be unable to save Breslau, for the odds are too great, and we ourselves have already been weakened too much."

"Alas, he is right!" lamented the people, and those who were about to rush to the walls stood still, and their courage seemed to disappear.

"No!" exclaimed Count Pückler, ardently—"no, he is not right! It is not true; but even if it were true that we are too weak to hold out, would it not be much more honorable to be buried under the ruins of the city, than to live in disgrace and bow to a new master? Think of the shame of Magdeburg; remember that a cry of indignation was uttered by the whole of Prussia at the treachery and cowardice of that city! Citizens of Breslau, do you want to be talked of in the same manner? Do you desire to act so pusillanimously that your children one day will have to blush for their fathers? Do you want to behave so ignominiously, that your wives and sweethearts will deride you and call you cowards?"

"No, no!" shouted the people. "We will fight—fight for our honor and our king."

"Clear the way!" cried loud and imperious voices at that moment, and a procession of over a hundred citizens marched up Ohlau Street; it was headed by an old man with flowing silvery hair, who held a large folded paper in his hands.

The crowd, that hitherto only had had eyes and ears for Count Pückler, now bent inquiring glances on the new-comers, and looked searchingly and wonderingly at the old man, whom every one knew to be one of the most venerable and respectable citizens of Breslau.

"Where are you going, Mr. Ehrhardt?" asked many at the same time. "What is the object of your procession? What is the paper you hold in your hands?"

Mr. Ehrhardt held it up. "This paper," he said, "is a petition drawn up by the citizens who are following me. In it we depict the sufferings and privations we have undergone, and pray that a speedy end may be put to them. Matters cannot go on in this way any more; the distress is too great; we have borne all we can—we must think of ourselves for the sake of our wives and children. We have done enough to save our honor; self-preservation is also a duty. We have stated all this in our petition, and are about to take it to the city hall, in order to deposit it there by permission of the authorities, so that every one may sign it. This afternoon it will be presented to the governor. Hasten, then, to add your signatures, for the more the better. When the governor sees that the citizens are united, he will have to comply with our demands and enter into a capitulation. The enemy sent a flag of truce this morning; the bearer, I have been told, imposes very rigorous terms on the commander of the fortress. He threatens also that the city, if it do not surrender to-day, will be bombarded with red-hot shot long enough to set fire to all the buildings. Come, my friends, let us go. All good and sensible citizens will sign this petition."

The procession moved on. Profound silence ensued. Count Pückler was still standing on the curb-stone and looking in breathless suspense at the people that, a moment ago, had surrounded him. He saw now that many left him and joined those marching to the city hall.

"Citizens of Breslau!" he cried, in great anguish, pale with grief and horror—"citizens of Breslau, think of your honor; think of the many tears which the eyes of your noble queen have already shed for Magdeburg; remember that your king relies on you and on your love, and that his gratitude toward you will be boundless if you remain faithful now—faithful unto death! Think of the great king who fought seven long years for you, and whose glory still reflects a golden lustre on the whole of Silesia. Do not join the timid and cowardly. Stand by me. Let us go together to the city hall—let us demand the petition that we may tear it to atoms; then go to the governor and tell him that he must not capitulate, but resist till—"

"Till we die of hunger!" cried a harsh voice, and a tall, broad-shouldered man elbowed himself through the crowd and walked up to the count. "Count Pückler," he said, menacingly, "if you continue talking about resistance, and other nonsense of that kind, you are a miserable demagogue, and the assassin of those who believe your high-sounding words.—Listen to me, citizens of Breslau. I am secretary of the commission of provisions, and do you know whither I have been ordered to go? To the municipal authorities! I am taking to them a list of what is still on hand.

There are in Breslau at the present time only twenty thousand pounds of meat, and the bakers and brewers have no fuel left. If we do not open our gates to the French, death by starvation will await us after to-morrow. Therefore, let all those who do not wish to die of hunger hasten to the city hall and sign the petition that will be deposited there."

At this moment a strange, hissing noise resounded through the air; a glowing ball rushed along and penetrated the roof of a house, from which flames immediately burst forth. A second and a third followed and set fire to several houses on the market-place.

"The bombardment is recommencing!" howled the multitude. "They are firing red-hot shot again. Come, come to the city hall! Let us sign the petition." They hastened off like game pursued by a hunter; fear lent wings to their feet, and anxiety rendered the weak strong, and enabled the lame to walk.

Count Pückler was left alone. For a moment he leaned pale and exhausted against the wall of the house; large drops of perspiration covered his brow; his cheeks were livid, his lips were quivering, and he gazed at the city hall, the steps of which the crowd were ascending at that moment. "They are going to sign my death-warrant," he muttered, in a low voice. He descended from the curb-stone, and, drawing himself up to his full height, walked slowly down the street. The bullets were whistling around him and dropping at his side. He quietly walked on. He reached the house in which he was sojourning, and ascended the stairs slowly and with dilated eyes, like a somnambulist. He reached the first landing, and had turned already to the second staircase. All at once invisible influences seemed to stop his progress; his face commenced quivering, his eyes sparkled, and turned with an expression of unutterable grief to the door which he was about to pass. "I must see her once more," he muttered; "possibly she may follow me." He pulled the bell vehemently, and a footman opened the door. "Is my betrothed at home?"

"Yes, count; the young countess is in her room; her parents are in the parlor. Shall I announce you?"

"No, I will go to her without being announced." Passing the footman and hastening down the corridor, he rapped at the last door. Without waiting, he opened it and entered.

A joyful cry was heard—a young lady as lovely as a rose ran toward him with open arms. "Have you come at last, dearest? Have you really been restored to me? Oh, how I have been longing for you all the morning—how my heart trembled for you! With what an agony of fear every ball passing over our house filled me, for any one of them might have struck you! But now I have you back. I shall detain you here, and not let you go any more. You shall be like a caged bird. Would that my heart were the cage in which I could keep you!" She laid her head, smiling and blushing, on his breast while uttering these words; in the ardor of her own joy she had not noticed how pale, listless, and sad he was. When she raised her bright eyes to him, her smile vanished. "What ails you, my beloved?" she asked, anxiously. "What is the calamity that I see written on your face?"

He took her head between his hands and looked long and mournfully at her. "Camilla," he said, in a low, husky voice—"Camilla, will you die with me?"

"Die!" she asked aghast, disengaging her head from his hands. "Why should we die, Frederick?"

"Because I do not wish to live without honor," he exclaimed, with sudden vehemence. "Because our misfortunes are so terrible that we must escape from them into the grave. All is lost! Breslau will fall, and we shall be obliged to prostrate ourselves at the conqueror's feet! But I will not, cannot survive the disgrace of Prussia. 'Victory or death!' was the motto which I once exchanged with Schill. I swore to him to live and die with my country; I swore to the king, if Breslau fell, that I would die the death of a traitor. Breslau falls; therefore I die!"

"No, no," exclaimed Camilla, clinging firmly to him, "you shall not die—you must not die! You are mine; you belong to me, and I love you! Hitherto you have lived for your honor as a man—now live for your heart and its love! Listen to me, Frederick! How often have you implored me to accelerate the day of our wedding, and I always refused! Well, I beseech you to-day, give me your hand! Let us go together to my parents, and ask them to send for a priest, and let our marriage take place to-day. And then, dearest, when the gates of Breslau open to the enemy, we can find a refuge at your splendid estate. The horrible turmoil of war and the clashing of arms will not follow us thither. There, amidst the charms of peaceful nature, let us commence a new life; with hearts fondly united, we shall belong only to ourselves, and, forgetful of the outside world, devote ourselves to our friends—to art and literature. Oh, my beloved, is it not a blissful future that is inviting you and promising you undisturbed happiness?" She laid her arms, from

which the white lace sleeves had fallen back, on his shoulders, and held her glowing face so close to his own that her breath fanned his cheek; her ruby lips almost touched his own, and her dark eyes were fixed on him with an expression of unutterable tenderness.

The count pushed her back almost rudely. "The happiness you are depicting to me is only given to the innocent, to the pure, and to those who have no desires," he said, gloomily; "it is the happiness of gentle doves, not of men. And I am a man! As a man of honor I have lived, and as such I will die. My life harmonizes no more with yours. Will you go with me, Camilla, into the land of eternal honor and liberty? Does not this world of treachery and cowardice fill you with disgust as it does myself? Does not your soul shrink with dismay at the infamy we behold everywhere at the present time? Oh, I know your heart is noble and pure, and despises the baseness which is now the master of the world. Let us, therefore, escape from it. Come, dearest, come! I have two pistols at my rooms. They are loaded, and will not fail us. A pressure of my finger—and we are free! Say one word, and I will bring them—say, my Camilla, that you will die with me!"

"I say that I will live with you!" she cried, in terror.

"Then you will not die with me?" he asked, harshly.

"No, Frederick, why should I die? I am so young, and love life; it has given me nothing but joy—it has given you to me—you, whom I love, for whom I will live, whom I will render happy! What do I care for the misfortunes of Prussia—what do I care whether Breslau surrenders to the enemy or not, while I am free to follow you—free to devote myself entirely to my love!"

"A woman's heart!—a woman's love!" said Pückler, with a contemptuous shrug of his shoulders. "I wish I resembled you; we then might be like cooing doves in the myrtle-tree. But my heart is rather that of an eagle—longing for the sun; and as he has set on earth, I shall fly after him. Farewell, Camilla, farewell! Forget me not, and be happy!" He imprinted a hasty, glowing kiss on her lips, and then turned toward the door.

Camilla rushed after him, and, clinging to him with both her hands, exclaimed: "Frederick, what are you going to do?"

"I go to the land of liberty, and will do what honor commands," he said, disengaging himself from her grasp, and rushing from the room.

"Frederick! Frederick!" she cried, in the utmost terror, running to the door; she could not open it, for he had locked it outside. "I must follow and save him," she exclaimed, and gliding across the room, she opened a small secret door in the opposite wall; scarcely touching the floor, she passed through the parlor, without taking any notice of her parents, who were sitting on the divan, and asked her in surprise for the cause of her hurry and agitation. She did not see that they were following her; nor did she hear them call her. Onward, onward she went through the room to the corridor, into the hall, and up the staircase. She rushed to the upper floor, and rang the bell violently, when the footman of Count Pückler opened the door, and stared surprised at the young countess. She passed him impetuously, and ran down the corridor leading into the sitting-room of her betrothed. But it was locked. Uttering a cry of despair, she sank breathless on her knees, and laid her burning forehead against the door.

The old count, with his wife, followed by Count Pückler's footman, now approached. "My child, my child!" murmured the old countess, bending over her daughter, "what has happened? Why are you so pale? Why do you weep?"

Camilla looked up to her with streaming eyes. "Mother," she exclaimed, in a heart-rending voice, "mother, he will kill himself!"

"Who?" asked her father, aghast.

"My betrothed," she gasped faintly. "With a more generous and scrupulous regard for his honor than we are manifesting for ours, he will not survive the disgrace of his country. As Breslau is doomed, he will die! As I did not care to die with him, he angrily repulsed me, and went up to his room to die alone. Oh, mother, father, have mercy on my anguish! Help me to save him!"

"Is the count really here?" said Camilla's father to the footman. "Is he in this room?"

"Yes, gracious count, my master came home a few minutes ago. Without saying a word, he went to his room, and locked himself up."

The old count stepped to the door, and, grasping the knob, shook it violently. "Count Pückler, open the door," he cried aloud. "Your father-in-law and the mother of your betrothed are standing at your door, and ask to be admitted!"

"Frederick! Frederick!" begged Camilla, "I am on my knees in front of your door-sill, and implore you to have mercy—to have compassion on me! Oh, do not close your heart against me—oh, let me come in, my dear friend!" She paused and listened, hoping to hear a word or a movement inside. But every thing remained silent.

"If you refuse to listen to our supplications, we shall enter by force," exclaimed the count.

"My son," wailed the old countess, "if you will not listen to us, at least have mercy on my daughter, for she will die of grief if you desert her."

"My Frederick, I love you so tenderly—do not repel me!" wailed Camilla.

All was silent. "I must use force," said the count, concealing his anguish under the guise of anger. "Hasten to a locksmith," he added, turning to the footman; "he is to come here at once, and bring his tools with him. Notify also the officers at the neighboring police-station." The footman withdrew.

"My beloved," cried Camilla, wringing her hands, and her face bathed in a flood of tears, "my Frederick, I love you better than my life! Your wish shall be complied with. Open your door, and admit me. If I cannot live I will die with you! Oh, do not remain silent—give me a sign that you are still living—tell me at least that you forgive me—that—"

She paused, for a song suddenly resounded in the room; it was not a song of sorrow, but of wrath and manly courage. The words were as follows:

"Tod du süsser, für das Vaterland!
Süsser als der Brautgruss, als das Lallen
Auf dem Mutterschooss des ersten Kindes,
Sei mir willkommen!

Was das Lied nicht löset, löst das Schwert,
Blinkend Heil, umgürte meine Hüften,
Von der Schande kannst du Tapfre retten,
Zierde der Tapfern!"*

The voice died away. Camilla was on her knees, with clasped hands; her parents stood behind her in devout silence. Suddenly noisy footsteps drew near. At the entrance of the corridor appeared the footman with the locksmith, who came with his tools to open the door. The old count made a sign to him to stand aloof. He had heard a movement in the room, and he hoped Camilla's lover would voluntarily admit them.

A pause ensued—then a terrible report was heard in the room. Camilla uttered a loud shriek, and sank senseless to the floor.

An hour later, the locksmith succeeded in opening the door, which had been strongly bolted inside. Count Pückler sat in the easy-chair in front of his desk, immovable, with his face calm and uninjured, the pistol still in his hand. He had aimed well. The bullet had pierced his heart. On the desk in front of him lay a sheet of paper, containing the following words:

* See p. 9.

"Last greeting to Ferdinand von Schill, who took an oath with me that we would live and die as faithful sons of our country! Our country is sinking ignominiously into the dust; I will not, cannot survive the disgrace, and, therefore, I die. Farewell, you who took that oath with me—farewell Schill and Staps! I hope you will be happier than myself! I am the first of us three who dies because he despairs of his country. Will you survive me long? May God give you strength to do so! Farewell until we meet again!

"Frederick von Puckler."

On the following day the governor of Breslau commenced negotiations with the enemy, and on the 7th of January, 1807, Breslau opened its gates to the French troops, and the Prussian garrison laid down its arms.

CHAPTER XXII.

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS.

General von Zastrow, who had temporarily taken charge of the Prussian department of foreign affairs, was pacing his room. His whole appearance was indicative of care and anxiety. Whenever he passed the door leading into the anteroom, he stood still and listened, and then, heaving a sigh and muttering angry words, continued his walk. But at length it seemed as if his expectations were to be fulfilled; he heard approaching steps. The door opened, and the footman announced General von Köckeritz.

General von Zastrow quickly went to meet his visitor, and offered him both his hands. "I thank your excellency from the bottom of my heart for having yielded to my urgent supplications," he said, passionately, "and at the same time I beg your pardon for having been so bold as to request you to call upon me. But as you reside in the same house as their majesties, and as the king comes to see you frequently and unexpectedly, I believe we can converse here more freely and without fear of being disturbed."

"You are right, my dear general," said Köckeritz; "it is better for us to hold our little conferences at your house. My room, moreover, has walls so thin that every word spoken there can be heard outside. Alas, it is on the whole a miserable barrack in which the royal couple and myself are obliged to stay here in Memel! Low, dark rooms—no elegance, no accommodations, no comfort. Every thing is as narrow, gloomy, and smoky as possible, and then this fearfully cold weather! Yesterday, during the heavy storm, an

inch of snow lay on the window-sill in the queen's room, and, I assure you, it did not melt! Nevertheless, her majesty is perfectly calm and composed; she never complains, never utters any dissatisfaction, but always tries to prove to the king that she likes Memel very well, and that it is as beautiful a capital as Berlin."

"Ah, my respected friend," said General von Zastrow, mournfully, "this composure of the queen is very injurious to us. If she were more melancholy—if she bewailed her misfortunes more bitterly—if she manifested a more poignant sorrow, we should not be doomed to sit here on the extreme frontier of Prussia, but might hope to make our triumphal entry into Berlin, perhaps, in two weeks."

"Into Berlin?" asked General von Köckeritz, greatly surprised. "Why, you are talking of a miracle which I am unable to comprehend."

"Oh, your excellency will understand it soon enough," replied General von Zastrow, smiling, "if you will only be so kind as to listen to me a little."

"I assure you, my friend, I am most anxious to hear your explanations; I am burning with the desire to know how we are to bring it about to leave this accursed, cold Memel, and return to Berlin within so short a time."

"Well, what is the cause of our sojourn here?" asked General von Zastrow. "What has driven us hither? What has deprived the king, our august master, of his states, of his happiness—nay, almost of his crown? What is the cause that our beautiful and amiable queen has to undergo all sorts of privations and inconveniences, and is compelled to reside, instead of in her palace at Berlin, in a miserable, leaky house in Memel, where she is closer to the Bashkirs than to civilized people? The war is the cause of all this!"

"Yes, if my advice had been followed, these calamities would never have befallen us," replied General von Köckeritz, sighing; "we would have remained on terms of friendship and peace with the great man whom Heaven has sent to subjugate the world, and resistance against whom is almost equivalent to blasphemy. He frequently and magnanimously offered us his friendship, but at that time more attention was paid to the vain boastings of the lieutenants of the guard; and the rhodomontades of Prince Louis Ferdinand unfortunately found an echo in the heart of the queen. The advice of older and more prudent officers was disregarded, and the king, in spite of himself, was dragged into this war, which we have had to expiate by the defeats of Jena and Auerstadt, and by the loss of so many fortresses and provinces. And who knows what may be in store for us yet? Who knows what mischief may yet threaten the crown and life of Frederick William!"

"Well," said General von Zastrow, with a sarcastic smile, "it looks as though the fortune of war were now turning in favor of the Russians. Think of the great victories which the Russian General Benningsen has already won. Did not twenty-four trumpeting postilions proclaim to us at Königsberg, on new-year's-day, the Russian victory of Pultusk?"

"Yes, but those twenty-four postilions and that emphatic announcement were the most brilliant parts of the victory," said General von Köckeritz, shrugging his shoulders. "Benningsen was not defeated by Napoleon at Pultusk, but honorably maintained his position on the battle-field—that is what the whole amounted to."

"Yes, but we are celebrating again a great and brilliant triumph. On the 7th and 8th of February the Russian General Benningsen and our General Lestocq claim to have obtained another advantage over Napoleon and his marshals. I suppose you are aware that Benningsen himself has arrived here in order to communicate the news of the victory of Eylau to the royal couple?"

"Yes, I know," said Köckeritz. "But I know also what this new success really amounts to. The Russians are very liberal in issuing victorious bulletins, and if they have not been massacred in a battle to a man, the last ten survivors shout invariably, 'Victory! We have won the battle!' That of Eylau is even more problematic than that of Pultusk. Pray tell me, who held the battle-field of Eylau?"

"Napoleon with his French, of course."

"And who retreated from Eylau toward Königsberg?"

"General Benningsen with his Russians."

"And these Russians, nevertheless, are audacious enough to claim a victory!" exclaimed General von Köckeritz. "These fellows regard it such when Napoleon, instead of pressing them on their retreat, remains where he is, and gives them time to escape."

"They are in ecstasies, because they infer from this delay of Napoleon, and from his unwonted inactivity, that he also stands in need of repose and recreation," said General von Zastrow. "The severe winter, bad quarters, hunger, and thirst, have greatly exhausted the strength of the grand army, and the lion would like to rest a little. For this reason—and now I come to the point concerning which I requested your excellency to call on me—for this reason, the great Napoleon desires to make peace. The conqueror of

Jena himself offers it to the vanquished King of Prussia."

"What? Do you really think that to be true?" asked General von Köckeritz.

"I do not only think, but know it to be true," said Zastrow. "General Bertrand arrived here an hour ago, and called on me with the request to present him to the king, that he might deliver him an autograph letter from the Emperor Napoleon. I told the general that I should return his visit in half an hour, and then conduct him to his majesty. I wished to profit by this half hour, my dear friend, to confer with you about this matter."

"And did General Bertrand inform you that Napoleon would offer peace to our king?"

"Yes, your excellency. He communicated to me the contents of the imperial letter. The lion of Jena magnanimously offers once more to make peace."

"We must strain every nerve to induce the king to accept these overtures," exclaimed Köckeritz, quickly.

"Your excellency is the only man sufficiently powerful to induce the king to come to such a decision," said Zastrow. "You must be so kind as to prove to him that to continue the war with France is to bring about the ruin of Prussia. If he does not accept the offer of Napoleon, he is ruined, for the emperor would not forgive such obstinate hostility; and, if Prussia will not live with him on terms of friendship, he will annihilate her in order to be done with her."

"I shall not threaten the king by laying too much stress on the strength of his enemy," said Köckeritz, "for that would wound the pride of his majesty, and provoke his sense of honor to renewed resistance. But I shall call his attention to the weakness and fickleness of Russia, informing him that our friends, the Russians, are behaving in the most shameful manner in those parts of Prussia which they are occupying, and committing so many outrages that the inhabitants are praying on their knees to God to grant victory to the French, so that they might deliver them from the Russians. I shall tell him that the distress and the extortions the Prussian farmers have to suffer at the hands of our allies are perfectly incredible; that the peasants in the villages have been stripped of every thing, to such an extent that they beg the Cossacks, who have robbed them of their provisions, for their daily bread; that many of them are dying of hunger, and that unburied corpses have been found in the houses of several villages now occupied by our troops. And, above all, I shall beseech his majesty to repose no confidence in the Russian friendship! Whatever the czar may say about his fidelity, he has not the power of carrying his point, and all his resolutions will be frustrated by the resistance of his generals and of his brother. The Grand-Duke Constantine and the larger and more powerful part of the Russian nobility are anxious for peace; and Constantine, whose views are shared by Benningsen, will leave no intrigues, no cabals untried in order to gain the czar over to his opinion, and plunge him into difficulties from which he will finally be able to extricate himself only by making peace—a peace concluded at the expense of Prussia. Russia and France will be reconciled over the corpse of Prussia! Even now it is distinctly to be seen what we have to expect from the czar's assistance. Our allies are doing nothing really to help us, but whatever steps they are taking are exclusively for their own safety. It is true, they advanced at first, but only in order to prevent the French from approaching their frontier. Since that time, however, in spite of the battle of Pultusk, the Russians have steadily retreated, although the enemy did not compel them to do so. They accomplished thus their own purpose, that is, to devastate a province of Prussia, and protect themselves by this desert from a French invasion."

"It is true," said General von Zastrow, "our friends are ruining us by a mere semblance of aid. If they really were honest and faithful allies, would they not strain every nerve to preserve Dantzic to us? General Benningsen did promise to succor the fortress and raise the siege, if Dantzic held out only two months longer. But what is he doing to redeem his promise? Absolutely nothing! We reproached him with his inactivity, and he excused it by asserting that the army would first have to be reënforced. He admits that the fall of that seaport would be a great disaster, but refuses to do any thing decisive for its safety. Therefore, if we do not give up the equivocal friendship of the Russians—if we do not now make peace with France, Dantzic will be lost, and Colberg and Graudenz will likewise fall, in spite of the efforts of their heroic defenders, Schill and Colomb. Oh, I beg you induce the king to accept the peace if the terms offered to him be not utterly inadmissible. These Russians will never deliver us. Suppose even another general than Benningsen, and better disposed than he, should advance after his so-called victories in the same manner as Benningsen is retreating now, he would restore to us no state, only a desert. The king ought to believe us that they are utterly unwilling to render us assistance, and that they only

intend devastating our country in order to protect themselves. Whatever the noble and generous Emperor Alexander may order, it is certain that nothing will be done. Even though we should protest and clamor against it in the most heart-rending manner, we should be unable to bring about a change."

"But should we succeed in convincing the king," said General von Köckeritz, "how are we to persuade the queen? Her heart, otherwise so gentle and generous, is filled with hatred against Napoleon, and she believes in the friendship of the Russian emperor."

"Will you take it upon yourself, your excellency, to persuade the king to make peace with France?"

"I believe I shall be able to do it," said General von Köckeritz, after a brief reflection.

"Well, for my part, I undertake to persuade the queen to acquiesce, at least in silence, and not advocate so warmly the alliance with Russia."

"I should like to know by what charm you intend to accomplish such a miracle."

"By a very simple one, your excellency. I shall cause my niece, the Countess von Truchsess, who is not merely lady of honor, but also reader to the queen, to read to her majesty the last numbers of the *Berlin Telegraph*, which I have just received. This seems like a riddle, but it is not. That journal contains charges against the queen, which, it appears to me, render it impossible for her to declare so loudly and publicly in favor of a continued alliance with the Russian emperor. Her majesty, therefore, must be informed of the contents of those articles; she must know in what sense public opinion—or, if you prefer, the wicked world—is interpreting her enthusiasm for the Russian alliance. She must learn it this very hour, that, at this momentous crisis, she may not try to stem the tide of events. We must tie her hands in order to prevent her from destroying the work we are taking so much pains to accomplish. While your excellency goes to the king in order to take his heart by storm with your convincing eloquence, and I am afterward conducting General Bertrand to his majesty (to whom he will present the pacific overtures and the autograph letter from Napoleon), my niece, the Countess von Truchsess, will read to the queen the articles published in the *Telegraph*, and if the king should really hesitate, and desire to hear the opinion of his wife, she, in her just indignation, will assuredly not advocate his cause for whose sake she has to bear the slanders of the public press."

"Heaven grant that you may be a true prophet, general!" said Köckeritz, heaving a sigh. "The queen, however, is so magnanimous that she might even overlook her personal wrongs, and the slanders heaped on her, if she thought the welfare of the country was at stake. I believe she esteems the honor of Prussia even higher than her own, and in case she should believe the former to be endangered, would be willing to sacrifice herself."

"I believe your excellency is mistaken, so far as that is concerned," said General von Zastrow, smiling. "The wife of Frederick William, aside from being a high-minded queen, is a woman who has the utmost regard for her reputation and virtue, and who, for the sake of her husband and children, would not suffer a breath of suspicion upon her honor. Well, we shall see whether you are right or not. It is high time for us to go to work. As you have promised me your assistance, I am quite hopeful, and believe we shall succeed in restoring peace to poor tormented Prussia. Go, then, your excellency, to perform your part; I will go to the Countess von Truchsess, to bring her the newspapers, and then it will be high time to conduct General Bertrand to the king. Well, Heaven bless us all, and cause Prussia to make peace at last with the Corsican lion!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE SLANDEROUS ARTICLES.

Queen Louisa was in her cabinet, engaged in reading the letters and journals brought by the courier, who had just arrived from Berlin. She glanced hastily over the papers, and then turned to the letters that lay unopened before her. On the other side of the small table, standing in front of the divan, sat the young Countess von Truchsess, who was occupied in arranging the journals. The queen meantime was reading her letters; during the perusal her features lighted up more and more, and a delicate blush mantled her pale cheeks.

Louisa had but just recovered from a severe and dangerous illness, which had attacked her soon after her arrival at Königsberg. The suffering which her courageous soul was enduring with so much constancy and heroism had undermined her body; weaker than her mind, it had succumbed to the burden of her grief. A nervous fever had confined her to her bed for weeks; it had afforded her at least some consolation by rendering her unconscious of misfortune, and causing her, in her delirious moments, to live again through

the joyful days of the past. While she was dreaming and believing herself happy in the splendors of a former life, real and fearful disasters had befallen her cause. She had not learned that the French were approaching nearer to Königsberg, and that the unfortunate royal family were no longer safe there. She had not been conscious in her fever that she had been lifted from her couch into the travelling-coach. to be conveyed to Memel—that her carriage had been transformed into a sick-bed, and that she had lain on the cushions with burning cheeks, singing sweet lullabies, and rejoicing in her fancied happiness.

But at length her fever subsided, and consciousness returned. All the mournful news which during her illness had been concealed from her, overwhelmed her as soon as she recovered, and for this reason her health had improved but very slowly. At this hour, as we have said, the blush had returned to her cheeks, and her eyes were beaming again with the fire of former days. The letters gave a glimmer of hope to her soul. They told her of the brave defenders of the fortresses that had not surrendered, and of heroic Ferdinand von Schill, who, with his soldiers, was doing so much injury to the enemy, and who had succeeded in capturing one of the commanding generals of the besieging army, Marshal Victor. They told her of Graudenz, the commander of which had sworn to be buried under the ruins of that fortress rather than open its gates to the enemy; they told her also of Dantzic, which was still courageously holding out and hoping for the succor the Russians had promised. And these letters contained still other hopeful news: that Berlin, which, according to former statements, was said to have already submitted to Napoleon, was bowing very reluctantly to the behests of the autocrat, and still waiting for the hour of deliverance.

"Oh, I knew well enough," said the queen, laying aside the last of her letters, "I knew well enough that the inhabitants of Berlin are affectionately devoted to us. I never doubted their constancy, and how should I? Those whom you meet with a heart full of love are compelled, as it were, to return your love. The king and I always loved Berlin, and always counted on its fealty. I am glad, therefore, to hear that our hopes will be fulfilled one day! It is still a dark, stormy night, but daylight will come—the rising sun will dispel the storm and scatter the darkness. You shake your head, Countess Truchsess? You do not believe in my prophecies?"

"I do not believe in the fidelity of the inhabitants of Berlin, your majesty," sighed the countess, "they are a frivolous, fickle people, who revile those to-day whom they admired but yesterday."

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, sinking back upon the sofa, "the throbbing of my heart tells me that you have to communicate bad news! What is it?"

"No, most gracious queen, command me rather to be silent," said the lady of honor, imploringly. "Your majesty looks so pale that I am afraid any excitement would injure your weak nerves. You need repose and ought not to be irritated; besides, what does your majesty care for the slanders of the populace? Such arrows recoil from the pure."

"Ah," said the queen, with a faint smile, "you are dealing with me as did Robert the hunter with the count in Schiller's 'Walk to the Forge.' You are stimulating my curiosity by mysterious words—you are talking about slanders, and yet you do not tell me what they are."

"Only with the difference, your majesty, that Robert the hunter told falsehoods, which he himself had invented, while I alluded only to those of others, and despise them from the bottom of my heart."

"Then you mean to say that I have been slandered," exclaimed the queen, in a low voice. "Tell me, countess, what did your friends write to you? What stories have been disseminated? I desire to know!"

"Gracious queen, my friends did not write any thing on the subject. I saw only what, unfortunately, thousands have already seen."

"What did you see?" said the queen, angrily. "What do you refer to? Do not speak any longer in riddles, if you please."

"Your majesty, I have glanced at the pamphlets and journals lying there, and request you not to insist to-day on my reading to you the articles contained in them."

"Ah, that is it!" exclaimed Louisa, laying both her hands on the periodicals which the countess seemingly wished to withhold from her. "These contain the slanders. I must know what they are. Read them to me, countess." And the queen folded her arms with a resolute air.

"Have mercy on me, your majesty! I am really afraid—my lips cannot easily recite those vile lines, and your majesty, besides, will be angry with me for complying."

"No, no," exclaimed the queen, impatiently, "I am not angry with you. You only did your duty in calling my attention to these things, and having taken upon yourself the task of being my reader, perform it now! What pamphlets are those sent to us?"

"Your majesty," said the countess, in an em-

barrassed tone of voice, "there is, first, a pamphlet entitled 'A True Account of the Interview of the Emperor Alexander with the King of Prussia at the Grave of Frederick the Great.'"

"Read it," replied the queen, dryly, "it is always good to listen to the true account of events in which we have taken part." And without uttering a word—without even a frown, she listened to the comments on the scene at the grave of Frederick. They were malicious and scornful, representing it as a farce.

"Well," said the queen, when the countess had finished, "if that is the worst, I feel at ease again. We must submit to abuse, and I sincerely pardon all those who expose me to the derision of the world by depicting me as a martial Joan of Arc. It has not been permitted me to live quietly in the shade of domestic happiness. A queen stands alone on a summit; she is seen and watched by every one, and it is, therefore, but natural that she should be hated and abused more relentlessly than other women, particularly if she be unhappy. For sovereigns are never pardoned, although they are subject to human failings, and their misfortunes are always regarded as their own faults. Let the malicious, therefore, deride us as much as they please; the good will only love and respect us the more. Proceed, countess! What else did we receive?"

"Nothing, your majesty, but a few numbers of the *Telegraph*."

"Ah, read them," exclaimed the queen. "I know that journal will not slander me. Its editor, Professor Lange, is a patriot, and, for this reason, I had promised to lend him the portrait of the king which I am wearing in a locket, that he might give his readers a good likeness of their beloved monarch. The disastrous events of the war, and my departure from Berlin, prevented me from fulfilling my promise. But there will be better times for us, perhaps, and I shall then be able to reward all those who remain faithful to us."

"And I hope your majesty will also be able to punish those who prove treacherous," exclaimed the countess, vehemently.

The queen shook her head. "No," she said, "those who wrong me I will pardon, and those who are faithless I will leave to their own conscience. Now, countess, read to me the articles of the *Telegraph*."

"Does your majesty command me?"

"I do!"

The countess took one of the sheets and read in a tremulous voice: "'A reliable account of the reasons why the queen compelled her husband, in spite of his reluctance, to conclude an alliance with the Emperor of Russia, and why she herself entered into a love-affair with Alexander of Russia—'"

Louisa started, and a deathly pallor covered her face like a veil.

"Oh, my queen!" exclaimed the countess, imploringly, "do not insist on my reading any further. I have not courage to do so."

"If I have courage enough to listen, you must have courage enough to read," said the queen, almost harshly. "Read—I command you."

And the countess, in a low and tremulous voice, read the disgraceful charge preferred by that journal, which accused the queen of loving the Emperor Alexander in the most passionate manner. "Queen Louisa," said the editor, "was in favor of the alliance with Russia, because her heart had concluded an alliance with the handsome emperor, and she met with her 'fine-looking' friend for the last time in the presence of her husband at the grave of Frederick the Great. The alliance of their hearts was sealed there by a glowing kiss, which Alexander imprinted on the lips of Louisa."

The queen uttered a cry, and sprang up like an angry lioness. "That is not true—that cannot be in the paper!" she cried, almost beside herself.

The lady of honor silently handed her the paper. Louisa seized it, but she trembled so violently that she was hardly able to decipher the characters. She at last read the slanderous article herself. Heart-rending groans escaped her, and a strange twitching and quivering distorted her features. "It is indeed true, I have been wickedly reviled!" she exclaimed, throwing the paper aside. "My enemies will rob me of the only thing remaining—my honor—my good name. They desire to expose me to the scorn of the world. Oh, this disgrace is more shocking than all my other sufferings. It will kill me!" She covered her face with her hands and wept piteously. The tears trickled between her fingers, and fell on her black dress as if adorning it with diamonds.

The Countess von Truchsess was touched by the queen's grief. She softly gathered up the other papers, and was about to leave the room, but the noise of her footsteps aroused Louisa from the stupor of her despair. She quickly dropped her hands from her face and dried her tears. "Stay here," she said; "read the remainder. I want to hear it all." And as the lady of honor remonstrated against this order—as she implored the queen to spare herself, and to close her ears against such slanders, Louisa said, gravely and

imperiously: "I want to know it all! Unknown terrors are even worse than those which we do know. Read!"

The countess, therefore, was obliged to read. The remaining numbers of the journal repeated the same charge. They stated, though in different words, that the queen alone was in favor of the alliance with Russia; that the king would be quite willing to make peace with France, but that his wife would never permit it, because she was passionately enamoured of the emperor of Russia, and maintained a tender *liaison* with him. The queen listened as immovable and cold as a statue; her whole vitality seemed suspended; she then pressed her right hand firmly against her heart; with her left she clung convulsively to the back of the sofa, on which she was sitting, as though she wished to prevent herself from falling. Her eyes stared wildly, as if strange and fearful visions passed before them. Thus she sat, long after the countess had paused, an image of grief and horror. The lady of honor dared not interrupt her; but clasping her hands, and weeping softly, she gazed at the queen, who, in her grief-stricken beauty, seemed to her a martyr. Nothing was heard but the monotonous ticking of the clock, and, at times, a low whistling of the canary-bird, in its gilt cage at the window.

But suddenly Louisa seemed to awake from her stupor; a tremor pervaded her whole frame; the flash of life and consciousness returned to her eyes. "That is his work," she muttered; "this attack comes from him—from my mortal enemy. It is Napoleon who has aimed this poisoned arrow at my heart, because he knew that nothing could hurt me and my husband more fatally than this dreadful calumny." And uttering a loud cry of despair, and wringing her hands, she exclaimed: "Oh, my God, what did I do, to deserve so terrible a disgrace! What did my husband do that he should be thus exposed to the relentless malice of his foe? Was not the measure of our wretchedness full? Could not that cruel man, who calls himself Emperor of the French, content himself with hurling us into the dust, and with robbing my husband of his states? Is the honor of his wife also to be sacrificed?"

A flood of tears burst from her eyes, and lifting up her arms to heaven, she cried: "My God, why didst Thou desert me! Have mercy on me, and send death to me, that I may conceal my reviled head in the grave! I am accused of an ignominious, sinful love, although I love no one on earth but my husband and my children! And a German pen was bought to write that slander—German eyes did not shrink from reading it, and German men and women permitted it to be repeated in this journal time and again! They did not feel that they were disgraced and reviled in my person—that all Germany was calumniated! For, in my grief, as well as in my love, I am the representative of Germany, and to insult me is to insult all German wives and mothers. Woe to you, Napoleon, for stooping to such an outrage! I pardon your attempts to rob me of my crown, but so long as I breathe, I will not forgive your attacks upon my honor!"

She rose slowly and proudly, and lifted her arms and eyes as if to utter a solemn imprecation. "Woe to you, Napoleon!" she cried, in a loud, ringing voice, "woe to you that you did not respect the innocence of the wife, and had no mercy on the honor of a mother! The tears which I am shedding at this hour will one day fall like burning coals on your heart, and for this torment I am now enduring I shall call you to account above! You think you are master of the earth, and, like fate itself, can dispose of empires; but you will be crushed at last—you will one day feel that you are only a weak creature—only dust, like all of us. You will yet sink down in your affliction, and cry for mercy. Let me live to see that day, my God: then my tears will be avenged!"

She paused, her eyes still directed toward heaven, her whole appearance breathing a sublime enthusiasm. She looked like a prophetess with her beaming face and uplifted arms. But after a while her arms dropped, her eyes turned to earth again, and the inspired prophetess was once more transformed into the unhappy woman, who feared she would die beneath the burden of her grief. She burst again into tears, and repeated again and again that terrible accusation, although every word of it struck her heart like a dagger. Gradually, however, the reviled woman, conscious of her innocence, became the proud and pure queen! With quiet dignity she stretched out her hand toward the countess, who rushed to her, pressed her lips on the royal hand, and sobbing asked to be forgiven.

"I have nothing to forgive," said Louisa, with a faint smile. "I know your intentions were good. Oh, believe me, during hours of great affliction the soul sees and comprehends many things that were hitherto concealed from it. Thus I understood in the outburst of my despair why all this had occurred, and why I had to undergo all these sufferings. Napoleon's poisoned arrow might have fallen powerless at my feet, if your uncle had not instructed you to pick it up and make me feel it. Hush! Do not utter a word

of apology! Your uncle, General von Zastrow, is a patriot in his way, and intended to teach me by your intervention how to become a good patriot in his sense—that is to say, to hate Russia, and to turn away from this alliance, for the sake of which I have been insulted. It was policy that induced the Emperor Napoleon to invent these calumnies, and it was policy again that induced your uncle to have you communicate them to me. This is a consolation; for, as it is, I am suffering only for the sake of my people, and you made me a martyr of the German cause. But I will bear all without complaining, however painful it may be; I do not wish it to cease if the welfare and happiness of Prussia should be delayed thereby but a single hour. I shall not ask the king to break off the alliance with Russia. Queen Louisa yesterday believed an alliance with Russia to be necessary and advantageous to the welfare and honor of Prussia; she will not change her mind to-day because Louisa, the woman, is charged with a dishonorable love for the Emperor of Russia. The woman may die of this calumny, but dying she will still be a queen, and say, 'I die for my country, and for my people! May my death be advantageous to Prussia!' Go to your uncle, countess, and tell him so! And now give me the numbers of the journal, and the pamphlet too; I will take them to the king. My fate, as well as that of Prussia, is in his hands. He alone can absolve me from the charge preferred against me. Give me the papers!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE JUSTIFICATION.

THE king sat at his desk, assiduously engaged in writing, when the door opened, and the queen entered. Her whole bearing breathed an unwonted, solemn earnestness; her head was proudly erect, her cheeks pale, and a melancholy smile was playing on her lips. In her left hand she held a roll of papers. The king rose hastily to meet his wife with a kindly greeting. Louisa gave him her right hand, and laid her head for a moment on his shoulder. Looking into her husband's face with a sweet, touching expression, "Do you love me, Frederick?" she asked in so low and gentle a voice that he scarcely heard it. Frederick William smiled, and, instead of replying to her, imprinted a kiss on her fair brow.

"Do you believe in me?" said Louisa. "Oh, my lord and king, I implore you by everything that is sacred—by the memory of our children—tell me, sincerely and frankly, as if standing before God, do you believe in me? Do you believe in my love—in my virtue?"

"Louisa," exclaimed the king, indignantly and almost aghast, "this question is too grave to be a jest, and too ludicrous to be grave."

"And yet I am in earnest," exclaimed the queen, in an outburst of excitement, which she was no longer able to restrain. "Look at these papers, Frederick. They contain a terrible charge against your wife—the mother of your children—the queen of our people. They accuse the wife of a disgraceful *liaison*, and the queen of the most infamous selfishness. Frederick, they charge me with loving the Emperor Alexander, and with having induced you, for the purpose of gratifying this passion, to enter into the alliance with Russia. Now, you know the disgrace weighing me down, of which all Germany is aware by this time, and in which the malicious and evil-disposed will surely believe, even though the virtuous and compassionate may refuse to credit it. Read these papers, my husband; read them in my presence, and if your features express but a shadow of doubt—if you fix your eyes but for a moment on me with an uncertain expression—let me die, and hide my head in the grave!"

She offered the papers to the king, but Frederick William only glanced at them, and then laying them on the table, took from one of its drawers other papers. "See, Louisa," he said in his blunt, dry manner, "these are the same numbers of the *Telegraph;* I have already had them for a week, and read every word of them."

The queen unfolded them. "It is true," she said, shuddering; "they are the same papers; I read there again the terrible words, 'Queen Louisa insists on continuing the alliance with Russia, only because her heart has formed an alliance with the fine-looking Emperor Alexander, and because she is passionately enamored of him." Oh, my husband, these words have engraved themselves as a stigma on my forehead, and should your eyes behold it also, let me expunge it by sacrificing my life. Tell me the truth, Frederick! Have I deserved it—have I ever sinned by a word—nay, by a look? I have often thought and said, that there is a vestige of truth at the bottom of every rumor—that it may be greatly exaggerated, but cannot be entirely false. Is there any foundation whatever for this slander? Consider well, my husband, and if you should find that I have sinned by a gesture, by a smile, banish me from your presence. Tell me that I am unworthy of being called your wife;

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tear the bonds of friendship that unite you with the Emperor Alexander, and oppose him as an enemy, menacing and demanding satisfaction. There must be no stain on your honor, and if you believe the statements of these papers, show to the world that you will punish the faithless wife and spurn the treacherous friend!"

The king put his hands on the glowing cheeks of his wife, and, raising her head, gazed at her with a long and tender look. "Your friends had no mercy on you, then?" he asked. "They had to inform you pitilessly of what I wished so anxiously to conceal from you? I would willingly have cut off my right hand if I could have expunged with the blood trickling from the wound those lies from the public mind. But the world has now as little mercy on us as fate. Affliction has hitherto surrounded your beauty with the glory of a martyr; but mean men have been instigated to make you a penitent sinner—a Magdalen of the martyr."

"My beloved Frederick," cried the queen, "you evade my question; you do not reply to me! Tell me the truth. Do you believe in me? Or do you deem me guilty?"

At this moment a low rap at the door interrupted them. The king listened, and then turned smilingly to his wife. "It is Minister von Zastrow, who comes with General Bertrand," he said. "I have granted an audience to the Frenchman at this hour, to receive the letter and the peace offers of Napoleon. He is proposing to me an alliance with France, and he, as well as his adherents here, I suppose, count on my having read those papers, knowing in what sense malicious men are interpreting our alliance with Russia. The reply that I shall make to Napoleon's envoy will be also a reply to your question; hence you shall hear it, Louisa. Enter my cabinet; the *portière* will conceal you from the eyes of my visitors, while you will hear every thing that is said." He took the queen's arm and conducted her quickly into the adjoining room; hastily rolled an easy-chair toward the door, and requested her by a wave of his hand to sit down on it. He then lowered the thick velvet *portière*, and, taking leave of his wife with a smile, returned to his room.

Louisa gazed after him. "Oh," she whispered, "how could I deceive and betray him?—him whom I love as the cause of all my happiness, and who has rendered my life sacred and glorious! Oh, my husband and my children! my conscience is clear, and accuses me of no guilt! Will you believe it, Frederick? Will those infamous slanders not leave a vestige of mistrust in your mind? But hush, hush! the envoy is there already! I will listen to what the king replies to him." She bent her head closer, and her large blue eyes with their searching glances seemed to pierce the heavy velvet, so that she might not only hear but see what was going on in the room.

In obedience to a sign made by the king, the door of the anteroom had opened, and General Bertrand, accompanied by General von Zastrow, entered. The king, standing in the middle of the room, returned the deep, respectful obeisances of the two gentlemen by a careless nod, and fixed his quiet eyes searchingly on the French general.

"Sire," said General von Zastrow, in a loud and solemn voice, "General Bertrand, adjutant of his majesty the Emperor Napoleon, in accordance with the gracious leave of your majesty, has appeared here in order to deliver to you an autograph letter from his imperial master."

"I am glad to see General Bertrand, and to make his acquaintance," said Frederick William, composedly; "I like the brave; and not merely the French army, but all men, know you to be a brave officer."

General Bertrand blushed. "Ah, sire," he said, "if I have not deserved this praise hitherto, your royal and kindly words will stimulate me in the future to strive with unflagging zeal to become worthy of it. I deem myself happy because my august master the emperor selected me to be the bearer of his letter and of his proposition, for he thereby enables me to do homage to the noblest and best of kings—to the exalted sovereign who bears prosperity and adversity with equal dignity. Your majesty will permit me to deliver the letter of my emperor into your hands." He approached the king, and, presenting to him the large letter to which the imperial seal had been affixed, reverentially bent his knee.

"Oh, no," said Frederick William, quickly, "a brave soldier must not humble himself in this manner; rise, general!"

General Bertrand rose, holding the imperial letter still in his hands, for the king had not yet taken it. Looking at him inquiringly, "Sire," he said, "may I request your majesty to receive the letter of my emperor?"

"Ah, I forgot," exclaimed the king. "You are the bearer of a letter the Emperor Napoleon has addressed to me. Let me confess my want of skill: I am unable to read your emperor's handwriting very rapidly, and it is disagreeable slowly to decipher such a letter. Moreover, what the emperor has to say to me will, doubtless, sound better when uttered by your lips, than in the black words on the paper. I, therefore, request you to read it to me."

"Sire," exclaimed General Bertrand, "I shall not dare to break the seal of a letter addressed to your majesty, and not to me."

"Oh, you may do so," said the king, "I permit you to break the seal. What the Emperor Napoleon and I have to write to each other need not be sealed. Everybody may know it. And, I suppose his letters will be only a sort of continuation of the bulletins he issued in Potsdam and Berlin. Such bulletins and letters belong to the world and history, which will judge them."

"Oh," whispered the queen, who had heard every word, "oh, why cannot I see him in his proud calmness and dignity, and thank him for his noble words!" She seized the *portière* with her slender fingers and pushed it aside a little, so as to be able to see what was going on in the other room. The king, perhaps, had noticed the slight rustling, for he glanced quickly at the curtain; it opened immediately, the noble and beautiful face of the queen appeared; she nodded with radiant eyes a smiling greeting to her husband, and kissed her hand to him; her head then disappeared from the aperture, and the folds of dark velvet closed again. General Bertrand and General von Zastrow had seen nothing. Both stood with their backs toward the door, and respect prevented them from looking around toward the slight noise that reached their ears for a moment.

A smile illuminated the king's face. "Well," he asked, almost jestingly, turning to General Bertrand, "you have not broken the seal yet? Do so, for you ought to understand that I am anxious to hear the contents of this letter."

"Sire, inasmuch as you command me, I obey," said Bertrand. With a quick pressure of his hand he broke the seal and opened the letter.

"Now let me hear it," said the king, gliding slowly and carelessly into the easy-chair standing at the side of the desk. "There are two chairs; take seats, gentlemen!"

"Your majesty will permit me to stand. My master the emperor is not accustomed to have his letters read in another position."

"Yes, he may require his subjects to pay to him the deference of standing when one of his letters is being read," said the king. "You may stand, therefore, if you please. General von Zastrow, sit down." The king said this in so stern and imperious a tone that General von Zastrow felt resistance impossible, and that he would have to obey the king's order. He took a chair in silence, inwardly aghast at this disrespectful breach of etiquette.

"Read," said the king, dryly. General Bertrand unfolded the letter and read as follows:

"Your majesty will receive this letter at the hands of my Adjutant-General Bertrand, who enjoys my friendship. I, therefore, request you to repose entire confidence in every thing that he says, and I flatter myself that his mission will be agreeable to you.

"Bertrand will communicate to your majesty my views about the present state of your affairs. I desire to set bounds to the misfortunes of your family, and to organize, as soon as possible, the Prussian monarchy, whose mediating power is necessary for the tranquillity of Europe.

"Bertrand will also communicate to you the easiest and quickest way in which this can be brought about, and I hope your majesty will let me know that you have taken the step which will accomplish this purpose in the best manner, and which, at the same time, will agree with the welfare of your subjects; that is to say, that you accept the peace which I am offering to you. At all events, I beg your majesty to feel convinced that I am sincerely disposed to resume our former relations, and that I also wish to come to an understanding with Russia and England, provided these powers should be animated with the same desire. I should detest myself if I were to be the cause of so much bloodshed. But how can I help it? The conclusion of peace is therefore in the hands of your majesty, and it would be the happiest day of my life if you accept my present propositions.

"NAPOLEON."

"You have to make oral explanations to this letter of your emperor?" asked the king, when Bertrand paused.

"Yes, sire, my master the emperor intrusted me with further communications to you," said Bertrand. "But, in the first place, I beg leave of your majesty to deliver the imperial letter into your hands." He approached the king and presented the paper to him with a respectful bow.

The king did not take it, but pointed to his desk. "Lay it there," he said, carelessly. "The purpose of this letter is accomplished; I know its contents, and that is all I care about. And now, general, communicate to me as briefly as possible the verbal commissions with which the emperor has intrusted you."

"Sire, his majesty the emperor authorized me to repeat to you that it was his liveliest wish to resume his former amicable relations with Prussia, and that he would shrink from no sacrifice to effect it. The emperor longs for nothing more ardently than to restore your states to your majesty, and to conduct you back to your capital."

"As his vassal?" asked the king, smiling sarcastically.

"No, sire, as a free and independent king."

"Not as Napoleon's ally, then?"

"Yes, sire, as the emperor's ally, but as free and independent as he is himself. It is true, the emperor hopes and wishes that Prussia will be friendly toward France; he relies on your majesty's assistance in his struggle with Russia, which, in that case, will soon bow to the united will of France and Prussia, and be compelled to accept a treaty of peace. In return, the emperor will surrender to the just wishes of your majesty seditious Poland, which, as the emperor has become satisfied, is unable to bear an independent existence. The rebellious provinces of Prussian Poland shall speedily be compelled to yield unconditional obedience to the Prussian sceptre, and your country shall occupy once more the position due to her in the council of European nations. It will be unnecessary for her to make for this purpose any sacrifices to the friends and allies of France; all her fortresses and provinces shall be fully restored, and so soon as the treaty of peace will have been definitively concluded, the French troops will evacuate the Prussian territory."

While General Bertrand was speaking, the face of Minister von Zastrow had brightened, and was now really radiant with joy. Animated by the cheering words of the Frenchman, he rose from his seat, and looked at the king with clasped hands and imploring eyes. But the countenance of Frederick William remained impenetrable and cold; not the slightest expression of joy or gratification was to be read in it.

"Are you done, general?" asked the king, after a pause.

"Yes, sire. I am waiting for your majesty's reply."

"This reply will be brief and decisive," exclaimed Frederick William, loudly, rising slowly and with truly royal dignity. "I will not accept this alliance and this peace!"

"Your majesty," said General von Zastrow, in dismay, forgetful of the requirements of etiquette, "your majesty, that is impossible! You cannot be in earnest; I beseech you first to hear the opinion of your ministers, and to consult a cabinet council."

"Silence!" said the king, indignantly; "the only voices that I ought to consult with regard to this question are not those of my ministers, but those of my conscience and honor. It behooves the king alone to decide upon war or peace. I repeat, therefore, I will not accept this peace nor enter into the alliance offered under such circumstances. I might content myself with this declaration, but I shall tell you the reasons of my refusal that you may repeat them to your emperor. I cannot accept, for it would be a defeat and disgrace more humiliating than the loss of a battle. What, sir! I am to receive by the grace and *bon plaisir* of your emperor the gift of a position to which I am entitled by my birth! The Emperor Napoleon condescends to restore my states after forcibly expelling me from them! If I were to accept this offer, I should thereby condemn myself; and this war, into which I entered so reluctantly, because I foresaw its disastrous consequences, would be nothing but a reckless adventure, abandoned by myself because unsuccessful. If I allowed Napoleon to reinstate me in my rights, what would I be but his vassal? Not a king by the grace of God, but a king by the grace of Napoleon—not the ruler of a free and independent German state, but the governor of a French province—the despised oppressor of an enslaved people, robbed of their honor, independence, and nationality. Now, I commenced this war for the sake of my own honor and that of my people. I commenced it to set bounds to French cupidity and thirst for conquest; to preserve to Germany her German and to Prussia her Prussian character, and to drive back the Confederation of the Rhine beyond the frontier of the Rhine. The fortune of war has not sustained me in these efforts, and victory perched upon the eagles of France. But the Prussian eagle is not yet dead; he may still hope to rise again, and, endowed with renewed vigor, reconquer what belongs to him. What was taken by the sword can be reconquered only by the sword. My honor, as well as that of my army and people, was wounded on the battle-fields of Jena and Auerstadt; it cannot be healed by the balm of Napoleon's grace; it can only be redeemed by blood!"

"Sire, I beseech you, do not allow yourself to be carried away by the ardor of your heroism," exclaimed General Bertrand, feelingly. "Remember that after the rejection of this peace the Emperor Napoleon will be a relentless enemy of yours, and leave nothing undone in order to annihilate Prussia. Your majesty ought also to take into consideration that you lack an army—that your forces have been dispersed, and that your fortresses have surrendered."

"Colberg and Graudenz are still holding out," exclaimed the king, "and so is Dantzic."

"Sire, if you reject this peace, the first step of the emperor will be to take Dantzic by assault," said General Bertrand.

"Your majesty, have mercy on Dantzic," ex-

claimed General von Zastrow, imploringly; "have mercy on your blockaded fortresses—on your poor distressed subjects!" So soon as your majesty accepts this peace, the Emperor Napoleon intends withdrawing all the French troops from Prussian territory. Oh, pray take into consideration how dreadfully your people have suffered by the heavy contributions, and the enormous supplies to the troops! Remember that they are overwhelmed with wretchedness, and are kneeling and crying to God and to their king to restore peace."

"O my God," murmured the queen, "inspire him with the true decision, and grant that he may perceive and choose what is right!" She knelt down behind the curtain as if to hear better the king's words, that to her were the words of God. The king did not seem to notice his minister's supplication; his eyes glanced at him coldly and disdainfully, and were then fixed gravely on the face of the French general.

"I am not quite done with my reply to your propositions," he said. "I have told you the reasons why I cannot accept peace. It only remains to explain why, though the terms were honorable, I could not and would not be allowed to enter into this alliance. By virtue of it I should be obliged to espouse the cause of France against her enemies, and to wage war against Russia, my ally. I am to violate the only sure compact remaining to me in order to become a mere cipher in the hands of Napoleon! I am to betray him who has been faithful to me! The Emperor of Russia is my personal friend. At the grave of Frederick the Great I swore with him to maintain the alliance of both our hearts and our states, and no other voice induced me to take this step but my inclination, my policy, and my reason. The Emperor of Russia, true to our mutual oath, renewed his protestations of friendship in the hour of danger, and his army is ready to uphold our common cause. If, now that France is offering peace to me at the expense of Russia, I were to accept it, I should commit a perfidious act, and, as a Prussian soldier, as a friend of the Emperor Alexander, I must decidedly reject any idea of such a desertion. A German keeps his word, and does not trifle with treaties he has sworn to. German fealty has not yet become an empty sound, and France will be obliged to admit that she is struggling with an adversary who does not sell his honor for provinces or for money. Now you know all I had to communicate. Tell Napoleon that intrigues and slanders cannot separate me from my alliance with the Emperor of Russia any more than adulation and advantageous offers. My resolution will remain as firm as a rock. And now, good-by, general!"

He waved his hand to Bertrand, and received with proud calmness the respectful bows with which the French general withdrew.

No sooner had the door closed than the queen appeared. Her eyes filled with tears, and stretching out her arms toward her husband, seemed a picture of beauty, grace, and love. The king hastened to her and pressed her firmly against his heart. "Are you satisfied with my answer, Louisa?" he asked. "Do you know now what I think of those wretched calumnies?"

The queen bent and kissed his hand. "I thank you, my beloved husband," she whispered tenderly. "Wise and kind as you always are, you knew how to comfort my heart, and by your heroic words to fill my soul with enthusiasm and delight. My husband and king, you have restored my honor. I care no longer for the abuse of the world, but shall always think of this sacred hour, for my king believes in me, and my husband still loves his Louisa; he knows that the mother of his children is innocent, and may freely raise her eyes to heaven."

"I know more than that," said the king, laying his hand on his wife's head, as if blessing her; "I know that in these times of adversity you are the only hope left me; I know that I derive courage and consolation from you, and that in my misfortunes I still deem myself fortunate, because you are by my side—the angel of my life!"

"Ah, Frederick," exclaimed the queen, bursting into tears, "Frederick, how rich and happy you make me! Am I not an enviable wife, possessed as I am of such a husband!" In passionate tenderness, she threw her arms about him, and in loving embrace rested long on his breast.

Some one rapped repeatedly and discreetly at the door. Louisa, blushing, raised her head and dropped her arms. The king ordered the person to walk in. It was General von Zastrow who entered, pale and gloomy. Frederick William smilingly beckoned him to approach.

"You are dissatisfied with me, Zastrow?" he said, in a pleasant tone; "you believe it would be better to make peace?"

"Your majesty, I am afraid you have rejected an advantageous alliance, and will, perhaps, be compelled soon to accept by far more rigorous terms."

"You do not know, then, that large Russian forces are advancing, and that the Emperor Alexander himself probably leads his troops against the enemy?"

"Pardon me, sire, but I do not believe in the

friendship of Russia. Your majesty uttered words so generous to-day, that my eyes filled with tears of admiration, and I felt proud as a man and subject, although my heart as a general and minister was overwhelmed with sorrow. May Russia deserve your fidelity! may she not disappoint your hopes, and commit, as you said, a perfidious act, by entering into an alliance with France at the expense of Prussia! But may your majesty, above all, get an army courageous and strong enough to brave all your enemies, and restore the greatness of Prussia!"

"You do not believe, then, in this army?" asked the king, gloomily.

"Your majesty, in order to organize an army, money — a great deal of money — is indispensable."

"And you mean to say we have none?"

"Your majesty, not only your privy purse is entirely exhausted, but there is also no money in the state and district treasuries. Gold and silver seem to have wholly disappeared; stocks and commercial paper are depreciating every day, and the bankruptcy of the state will be inevitable!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the king, indignantly, "do not utter such a word! Never shall I permit such distress to be inflicted upon my poor subjects!"

He commenced rapidly pacing the room; suddenly, however, he stood still in front of the queen, who had softly withdrawn into a window-niche, where she had watched every movement of the king. "Louisa, will your repasts be as agreeable to you on porcelain plates as on gold and silver?"

The queen smiled. "The little Princess of Mecklenburg was accustomed to take her meals off porcelain," she said, "and I honestly confess that the Queen of Prussia at times envied her her plain white plates."

The king, turning again to his minister, said: "We are not yet so poor as you seem to believe; our large golden dinner-set, the heirloom of our ancestors, was safely removed from Berlin, and is now here at Memel. It embraces pieces of the highest value, for which millions have been paid. May my ancestors pardon my giving away what they collected! I am not doing so in a reckless and extravagant manner, but with profound sorrow and with a mournful heart. But it cannot be helped! General von Zastrow, I shall issue the necessary orders to have my large golden dinner-set either sold or pawned. We shall receive at least a million dollars for it."

"And the privy purse of your majesty stands greatly in need of this million," said General von Zastrow, drawing a sigh.

The king shrugged his shoulders. "Not a dollar of it shall be paid into my privy purse," he said. "The money shall be distributed among the public treasuries, that the lack of funds may be temporarily relieved, and that my poor suffering subjects need not fear that the state become bankrupt."

"But if your majesty should carry out this generous resolution," exclaimed the general, "you may soon be in danger yourself of privations."

The king cast a long, inquiring glance on his wife. Louisa smiled and nodded kindly to him. "If questions of economy and family matters are to be considered," she said, "a woman may be permitted to say a word in the council of men, and to give her opinion as a housewife. I think we are tolerating a great many superfluous and very expensive things in our private household, and, if my husband does not object, I should like to ask for a few changes."

"I shall never dare to contradict you," said Frederick, kindly. "Let me, therefore, know the changes you wish to make."

"In the first place, I think that we have too many servants, considering our present circumstances, and the small house in which we are living. As we do not give dinners, the people attached to the kitchen may be greatly diminished; most of the cooks, as well as the legion of footmen, may be discharged. It is necessary, too, to reduce the number of carriages, and to sell most of the horses standing uselessly in the stable. A plain vehicle, drawn by two good horses, is sufficient for my children, and whenever I want a ride, I believe my husband will lend me his yellow travelling-coach."

"Provided you allow me a seat at your side," said the king, smiling. "Are there any other suggestions you deem necessary?"

"I wish the servants surrounding us to appear in a plain dress, and the expensive liveries, covered with gold and silver lace, to disappear. A plain black cloth coat, trimmed with white, is sufficient. It is not, however, to signify that we are in mourning, but only to represent the Prussian colors, and on looking at them I shall always feel proud and happy, while now, on beholding the liveries covered with gold and silver, I cannot suppress my shame, for I think of the distress of our subjects, and of the misery of our country. Let us begin, therefore, a plain, unpretending existence, my husband; let us set an example of simplicity to our people, and show them that one

may be contented, though deprived of the splendors of wealth and position."

The king took her hand and pressed it against his lips. "I consent to all your wishes, Louisa," he said; "I will issue to-day the necessary orders to the steward.—You see, general, our privy purse will not lack money, for we shall realize a handsome sum by the sale of our horses, carriages, and the gold and silver lace of the liveries. Moreover, the war will not last forever, and we may, perhaps, look soon for a final decision."

"Your majesty, war, then, is absolutely unavoidable?"

"You still ask this question? Yes, the war will be continued. I will hear nothing further about peace."

"In that case," said General von Zastrow, trembling, "I must humbly request your majesty to accept my resignation; the continuation of the war, and the rejection of the peace offered to Prussia, are so contrary to my conviction, that my conscience does not permit me to assist in carrying out your plans."

"The first duty of every faithful servant is to comply with his master's orders," said the king, sternly. "I cannot accept your resignation, for I know that you are an honest servant, and that only your momentary anger has misled you. I give you, therefore, time to collect your thoughts and regain your temper. Work and activity are the best remedies for that purpose, and possibly there may soon be a favorable turn in our affairs, proving to you that you were wrong, and causing you to change your mind. Until further orders, therefore, you will remain my minister of war, but I shall give you an assistant. I shall appoint Hardenberg minister without portfolio, and give him a seat and vote in the new ministerial council which I am about to organize."

General von Zastrow started, and his face became paler. "Your majesty," he faltered in a low voice, "I—"

"The matter is settled," said the king, calmly. "I do not wish to hear further objection, general. We shall hold a meeting of the ministerial council to-morrow, and Hardenberg must be present. Good-by!"

General von Zastrow dared not contradict; he bowed in silence to the royal couple and tottered to the door.

When he had retired, the queen, turning to her husband, exclaimed, "You touched his sorest spot. He hates Hardenberg, and it will greatly torment him to have him at his side."

"He deserved some punishment," said the king, gravely. "For it was certainly owing to him that you were informed of those infamous slanders. Who laid the papers before you?"

"The Countess von Truchsess, my reader."

"Zastrow's niece! My supposition was right. It was a deep-laid intrigue, designed to drive us into the meshes of the peace party, and induce us to give up the Russian alliance."

"Do not be angry with them," said the queen, "their intentions were good."

"I know the good intentions of those so-called friends," exclaimed the king, vehemently. "They drive a dagger slowly into our breast, and when they see the wound bleeding, they excuse themselves with the pretext that their intentions were good! But he who has really honest intentions tries to spare his friend every pain. My 'intentions' were also good when I concluded to place Hardenberg in company with Zastrow. I do not like change; but if Zastrow, in the course of a few weeks, should not accustom himself to the presence of Hardenberg, he must withdraw, and Hardenberg remain." *

CHAPTER XXV.

COUNTESS MARY WALEWSKA.

News of the highest importance reached Castle Finkenstein, where Napoleon had been residing since the battle of Eylau. Dantzic had fallen. It had been compelled to surrender, with its immense *matériel* and supplies. In vain had been the heroic defence of the garrison, the energy of General Kalkreuth, commander of the fortress, the ardor and courage of the soldiers, the unflagging self-abnegation of the citizens; in vain, the bloodshed, the mutilated limbs, the destruction of property! Lefebvre, the French general, had drawn the circle of his besieging forces closer around the devoted city, and fresh troops poured into his ranks, while every day the garrison was

* The united efforts of the peace party, headed by General Zastrow and Cabinet-counsellor Beyme, did not succeed this time in keeping Hardenberg out of the cabinet. The king reposed confidence in him, and when, a few weeks later, the Emperor Alexander paid a visit to the royal couple at Memel, he distinguished Hardenberg, and ignored General von Zastrow so completely, that the latter was deeply offended. His mortification was still augmented by the fact that Hardenberg was selected to accompany the king to the camp of the united Prussian and Russian troops. General von Zastrow then sent in his resignation, for the second time, and it was accepted. Hardenberg became minister of foreign affairs in his place.

becoming weaker. Only the most vigorous succor could have saved Dantzic. General Kalkreuth had long hoped for it. England, now the ally of Russia and Prussia, had promised aid, and equipped a sloop-of-war of twenty-two guns, to force the blockade, convey ammunition into the city, and destroy the pontoon-bridge of the French; but the sloop stranded, and had to surrender. The Russians, too, had promised assistance to the city. Seven thousand embarked at Pillau, and landed at Weichselmünde; but there they were attacked by Oudinot, who captured nearly one-half, and dispersed the rest.

The last hopes of Dantzic were gone; there was no relief. Lefebvre ordered a bombardment, and then sent a flag of truce to General Kalkreuth, informing him that he would take the city by assault if the fortress did not surrender. General Kalkreuth gazed mournfully at the stranded British sloop-of-war, and, pointing it out to his officers, who surrounded him in gloomy silence, said, "That is the tombstone of Dantzic!" He then sent for the bearer of the flag of truce, and the negotiations commenced. In the mean time, shells and red-hot shot were poured into the city, killing alike the soldiers on the ramparts and the citizens in their dwellings. Lamentations and shrieks, the roar of artillery, the uninterrupted peals of the tocsin, calling out the inhabitants, mingled with the crash of the falling houses, and the wails of the wounded and dying.

General Kalkreuth pitied the city; he was unwilling to add the horrors of an assault to the agony it had already undergone. He signed the capitulation, but claimed for the garrison liberty to march out without being made prisoners of war, and the surrender of their arms. Lefebvre granted these conditions, but insisted that the Prussian troops should not engage to serve against France before the expiration of a year. General Kalkreuth accepted this clause, and the gates of Dantzic opened to the French conqueror on the 24th of May, 1807.

The Emperor Napoleon received the news of this great victory at Castle Finkenstein, not far from Tilsit. His face brightened, and he immediately sent a courier to Marshal Lefebvre, to invite him to pay him a visit at the castle. But the joy of the emperor soon disappeared. His generals, intimate friends, and servants, endeavored to cheer him. They tried all the arts of eloquence and flattery to dispel his sadness. Talleyrand attempted to amuse him by reciting, with charming *médisance* and pointed humor, passages from the rich stores of his memoirs, and by relating, with Attic wit, the story of his first love, which had bequeathed to him a lame foot as a remembrancer. Lannes, with the blunt humor of a true soldier, told stories of his campaigns. Duroc smilingly reminded the emperor of many an adventure they had had in Paris, when, in plain gray coats, and hats drawn over their eyes, they had wandered through the streets of the capital, to ascertain the disposition of the people, and received many a rebuke on daring to abuse Napoleon. It is true, the emperor was amused on hearing such anecdotes, but his momentary laughter revealed more vividly his dark and stormy temper.

To-day the generals resorted to another method also of amusing him. They proposed cards. He agreed, and they commenced a game of *vingt-et-un*. Formerly, the emperor, on playing, had always been in excellent spirits, and did not disdain even to cheat a little, frequently concealing a card or two. But now he played gravely and honestly, and the consequence was that he lost. Throwing the cards indignantly aside, and greeting the marshals with a silent nod, he crossed the room with hasty steps, and retired to his cabinet.

"He has not yet forgotten the affair of Eylau," grumbled Marshal Lannes. "It is true, we boasted of our victory there, and ordered a *Te Deum* to be sung, but he knows very well how things stood, and feels badly because the Emperor of Russia also had a *Te Deum* sung."

"I do not believe, Marshal, that that is the cause of the emperor's grief," said Talleyrand, shrugging his shoulders. "Napoleon is not in the habit of mourning for past events, but a failure incites him to renewed exertions, and inspires his genius to perform fresh and daring exploits. Although the lion for once may have seen his prey slip from his grasp, it does not render him dispirited. He only shakes his mane, and crouches for a new bound."

"Then you believe, M. Minister, that the emperor is planning another battle?" joyfully asked Lannes.

"I am convinced of it, but do not believe that to be the reason of his ill-humor. The furrows on his brow express his sorrow for the death of young Napoleon—his little nephew—the grandson of the empress!"

"Ah, bah!" exclaimed Lannes, "it would really be worth while for a great chieftain to mourn for a child eight years of age!"

"He does not mourn for the child, but for the successor," said Talleyrand. "You know, the son of his brother Louis and his stepdaughter

Hortense was to be his heir—the future Emperor of France. You see how difficult it is to say in advance who is to be the heir of a throne. Some accident—a brick falling from a roof, an attack of the measles, a contemptible cough—may bring about the ruin of dynasties and the rise of new ones. The hopes of Josephine have been buried with young Napoleon Louis. Poor empress! her downfall is inevitable, for the emperor must think henceforth of an heir—of a legitimate union. Alas! how many tears will that cost poor Josephine's heart!"

"I am sure, Prince de Benevento, when you deplore the fate of the empress, you suggest great sufferings for her. But we know the subtle diplomacy of the minister who says that language was given for the sole purpose of concealing our thoughts. Hence, prince, I am in the habit of believing exactly the reverse of what you say. You are sure to overthrow Josephine and have already selected her successor. Tell us who is she? Upon whom do you intend to confer the honor of giving an heir to the emperor?"

"Let us rather put this question to our taciturn friend Duroc," said Talleyrand, softly laying his hand on the shoulder of the grand marshal, who was standing in front of them, with folded arms. "Please take notice that the grand marshal has not added a single word to our conversation—that he has listened calmly to our suppositions about the emperor's melancholy, and has not assisted us in ferreting out the truth. It is evident, therefore, that he is aware of it, and that it does not affect him painfully. Pray tell us, grand marshal, who is right—the Duke de Montebello or myself?"

"Perhaps, prince, both of you are mistaken," said Duroc, "and perhaps, again, both of you are right. Who is able to fathom the thoughts and secrets—but I believe the emperor is calling me!" And he approached the door of the imperial cabinet and listened.

"Duroc!" cried the emperor, "Duroc!"

The grand marshal took leave of the two gentlemen with a careless bow and hastened away. Napoleon sat on an easy-chair at the open window, supporting his head on his hand, and gazing out on the landscape. He seemed to have entirely forgotten that he had called the grand marshal, and did not even notice the latter after he had entered. An air of profound sadness was depicted in his features.

"Your majesty called me," said Duroc, approaching.

Napoleon started and turned his head slowly toward the grand marshal. "It is true," he said, "I called you, Duroc. I was ungracious, and left you without saying a kind word to you. I am sorry. You may repeat my words to the other two princes." He gave his small white hand to Duroc, who pressed it against his breast with an expression of tenderness. "I thank your majesty for this fresh proof of your magnanimity," he said, "and shall communicate it to the other two princes."

He was about to withdraw, but the emperor detained him. "Tell me, first, Duroc, whether they were very angry with me? Did old Lannes grumble? Did Talleyrand comment in his usual manner?"

"Oh, sire!" exclaimed Duroc, reproachfully, "all three of us were filled only with grief; we were considering what might be the cause of your majesty's melancholy."

"Well, and what did you guess? and what Lannes?"

"He believed your majesty was striving to crown the battle of Eylau with a brilliant victory, and that you were planning a new battle."

"He is right," exclaimed Napoleon, energetically. "We are not yet at the end of our struggle, and the brave men who were buried under the snow of Eylau must be avenged. I shall soon bid the sun of Austerlitz and Jena shine on the plains of Prussia, and dazzle the eyes of the Emperor of Russia. I will bring him to his knees and make him cry '*Pater peccavi!*' I will show him what it is to menace me; and when I unfurl my banner on the Kremlin of Moscow, Alexander shall bear the train of my purple cloak. The world belongs to me! Woe unto him who stands in my way—I will crush him as the elephant crushes the worm! Lannes is right; I am planning a new battle. But it is not this that makes me sad. What did Talleyrand say—Talleyrand, Prince de Benevento, with the keen nose and the impenetrable smile?"

"Talleyrand said it was not the planning of future battles, but that you were mourning for the little son of the King of Holland."

"Ah, indeed, Talleyrand is not altogether mistaken," exclaimed Napoleon, heaving a sigh; "my heart is mourning for young Napoleon. He was my darling, and I had accustomed myself to regard him as my heir. He was blood of my blood, and there was something shining in his eyes that seemed to me to be a beam of my own mind. I loved the boy. And now—what did Talleyrand say besides, Duroc?" asked Napoleon, interrupting himself. "You are silent. Be frank; I want to know it all!"

"Sire," said Duroc, timidly, "the Prince de

Benevento lamented the fate of the empress, for he believed the death of little Prince Napoleon Louis to be a mournful—nay, a fatal event for her, inasmuch as your majesty would now be under the necessity of having a successor to the noble and adored Empress Josephine, and an heir-apparent to your empire."

"And he was impudent enough to lament her fate!" exclaimed Napoleon, "he who has striven for years to overthrow her—he who always united with my family to prove to me the right of disowning her. Ah, poor dear Josephine! I ought never to have thought of listening to their insinuations; I was hitherto her most faithful defender, for I love her, and know that she is a sincere friend."

"An empress, sire," said Duroc, "who would be an ornament to any throne, and whose grace, amiability, and kindheartedness, have won as many subjects for your majesty as your battles. Sire, all France loves and worships the Empress Josephine; all France would weep with her if her enemies succeed in removing her from her throne, and from the side of her adored husband, and the tears and imprecations of a whole people would be the festive welcome with which France would receive a new empress!"

"You paint in very glaring colors," exclaimed Napoleon, gloomily, "but, then, I know you to be one of Josephine's admirers. She is really a good wife, and I never had room for complaint. But for one consideration, I should never think of separating from her. Fate is against her, and I am afraid it will compel me—ah, let us not dare to pry into the future. Let us rather attend to the present. You have told me the suppositions of Lannes and Talleyrand, but not your own. What did you say?" He looked at Duroc with his eagle eyes, and repeated, "What did you say?"

"Sire," replied Duroc, "I said nothing."

"You said nothing, because you know what ails me," said Napoleon, vehemently, "because you can fathom the pain, the anger, and grief of my heart!"

He rose from his easy-chair, and paced the room, with his arms behind him. "Duroc," he said, after a long pause, and in a husky, tremulous voice, "is it not a disgrace that this should happen? The world is bowing to me, and recognizing me as its master, and a woman dares resist me—a fair, delicate little creature that I could crush, as it were, in my hands—that an angry breath from my mouth could destroy as a lily in the blast of the desert. Duroc, she dares resist me, and opposes a cold, stubborn silence to my request—nay, to my fervent supplications!"

"Sire, she is married," said Duroc, timidly, she is married, and—"

"She is married to a husband whom she does not—cannot love," exclaimed Napoleon, impetuously. "He is a white-haired old man—a man of sixty years, to whom her parents have sold her!"

"But her husband is said to love his beautiful wife passionately."

"Let him dare molest her with his love," exclaimed Napoleon, menacingly; "let him touch only with the tip of his finger this flower that I myself would have! She has not deserved the sorry fate of withering at the side of a decrepit old man; she deserves to bloom at the heart of an emperor! Oh, how beautiful she is! When I saw her, for the first time, at the ball in Warsaw, I fell in love with her, and felt that I must possess her. Her light-colored hair was shining about her noble head like a halo; heaven seemed to be reflected in her azure eyes, and the tinge of melancholy shading her face rendered her still more charming and seductive. She was an innocent victim of the selfishness of others; I perceived it at a glance, and have loved her ever since. I took a secret oath to rescue her from her misery, and, by my love, to restore happiness to her! And yet she disdains me, Duroc!"

"No, sire, she does not disdain the exalted lover whom she worships; she is not, however, a flirt, but a virtuous wife. She will not prove faithless to her husband; she will not break the vows she took upon herself at the altar. She is engaged in a terrible struggle between duty and love, for your majesty knows very well that Madame de Walewska loves you!"

"No, no, she does not love me," exclaimed Napoleon, vehemently. "If she really loved me, she would listen to no other voice than mine! I supplicated her with the whole strength of my affection—with all the anger of a spurned admirer, with all the humility of a doting lover, but neither my anger nor my supplications were able to move her. And yet she asserts that she loves me; she dares to say that she shares my passion! Oh, she is a cold-hearted, cruel coquette; it gladdens her to behold my sufferings, and to play with my heart!"

"Sire, you are unjust," exclaimed Duroc. "Madame de Walewska is an angel of virtue and purity; she would joyfully sacrifice her life to save your majesty a sigh!"

"But she is unwilling to sacrifice to me this chimera of virtue," exclaimed Napoleon, "although she has already disregarded it by loving me. She is not courageous enough to give up

the semblance after having already parted with the substance. Like all women she is timid, and incapable of a great resolution! How many letters have I not written to her since I last saw her! After the battle of Eylau—like a miserable adventurer—a knight-errant—I went in disguise to the village where she had at length promised to meet me at her brother's house. What a wretched rendezvous it was! Nothing but a farewell scene! She desires to go into a convent, and give her heart to God, because she is not allowed to give it to me. I am no Abélard, however, and do not want her to become a Héloïse! If she goes into a convent, I shall have its walls torn down, and the order she has joined abolished."

"But she will not go into a convent, sire; love will at last triumph over her virtue, and she will finally declare herself vanquished. She promised your majesty to defer the execution of her purpose for a year, but, I am sure, she will not be strong enough to close her heart so long against the passionate entreaties of a lover whom she adores. The letters which your majesty writes to her, and which she does not refuse to accept, are like hot shells thrown into the fortress of her heart. They do a great deal of mischief."

"Forsooth, it is a consolation that she does not refuse my notes. I have sent them almost every day during two months; every week I send a courier who meets her when, escaping from the Argus-eyes of her husband, she goes to the cathedral. But I receive only laconic replies. This woman is either incapable of genuine love, or she is a demon who delights in torturing me."

"Sire, does it please your majesty to partake of this fruit?" said a gentle voice behind him.

The emperor started. Absorbed in his passion—filled with the idea now agitating his soul, he had not heard the door of the cabinet softly open, and was unaware that one of the imperial pages, holding a golden fruit-plate, had entered. Duroc also had not noticed that he was present while the emperor was still speaking, and that he must have overheard the last words of his majesty. The page leaned, pale and exhausted, against the wall near the door, and the golden plate was trembling in his hands.

Napoleon cast a glowing glance on him, and, rushing toward him, snatched the plate and threw it on the floor. As the peaches rolled across the room, he seized the page's arms, and drew him toward the window. "Who are you?" he asked, scarcely able to master his emotion. "Who are you? Speak, that I may hear your voice!"

The page looked in his face, aglow with anger, and his large blue eyes filled with tears. "I am a demon who delights in torturing you," he said in a low voice.

Napoleon did not utter a word. He tore the velvet cap from the page's head, and when his long silken hair fell on his shoulders in heavy masses, a smile of unutterable bliss overspread the emperor's face. He seized the fair ringlets with his hands and kissed them; he laid them on his own head, and they covered his face like a golden veil. He then shook them off with a merry laugh, and encircled the page so violently in his arms, that he uttered a cry. "Mary, Mary," he exclaimed passionately, "you are in my arms at last—you are here! Duroc, just look at this wonderful page. Come here, and look at the angel I slandered just now!"

But Duroc did not appear. He preferred to move quietly out of the room and to lock the door after him. Napoleon, therefore, was alone with his mistress, and thanked Duroc in his heart for this discretion. He clasped the weeping and blushing lady in his arms, and tried with gentle force to remove her hands, in which she had buried her face. "Mary," he asked, in a tone of suppliant tenderness, "Mary, you weep, and yet you say you love me?"

"Yes, I do love you," she exclaimed, sinking on her knees. "I love you intensely! Ah, have mercy on me! Do not condemn me because I come hither in spite of my conscience and my honor! Napoleon, I have no longer any thing on earth but you! I have no longer a country, a family, a name! I gave up every thing for you—my life, my honor, my happiness, are yours! Remember it, and do not despise me!"

He raised her from her knees and pressed a kiss on her quivering lips. "Mary," he said, "this kiss shall have the same effect upon you as of old the gift of knighthood had on the warrior—it will impart to you a higher and more sacred life, and confer the highest honor on you! Henceforth you are mine, and shall be as immortal as myself; and when posterity mentions the name of the Emperor Napoleon, it shall at the same time remember his beautiful mistress, and repeat the name of Mary Walewska together with that of Josephine!"

"Oh," murmured Mary, "you mention the noble and generous Empress Josephine, whom I worship, and against whom I am committing a crime! May fate enable me to atone for my guilt one day by sacrificing my life for you, and by proving to you and to the world that I loved you truly and faithfully."

"No, you shall live—live for me," said Napoleon, ardently; "do not complain any more,

Mary; dry your beautiful eyes. Come, sit down with me and tell me how it happened that you conquered your heart, and why I see you in this disguise?" He drew her to the divan and wound his arm around her waist. She laid her head on his shoulder, and gazed up to him with dreamy eyes.

"How it happened?" she asked. "I cannot find words to tell you. I reënacted the part of Penelope. Every night I tried to fasten a coat of mail around my heart—to protect it as with a network of virtue and duty. But your letters were the wooers that destroyed in the day the resolutions of the night. Your complaints rent my heart; your reproaches tortured my soul. I felt at last that I was irretrievably lost—that I loved you boundlessly, and that I was anxious to prove it to you. But my husband watched me with lynx-eyed vigilance; he was constantly at my side, now threatening, in the fury of his jealousy, to assassinate me should I leave him, and now imploring me with tearful eyes to spare his honor and pity his love. I felt that I would have either to die, or renounce my married life, and enter upon a new existence—an existence of true happiness if you love me, but of suffering and self-reproach if you despise me!"

"I love you," said Napoleon, with a proud and confident air. "Proceed."

"I have finished," she said. "My trusty lady's maid prepared every thing for my escape, and four days ago, when my husband believed me at church, I and my maid entered a travelling-coach and continued our journey day and night until we arrived at Castle Finkenstein."

"And this disguise?" asked Napoleon, pointing at the costume she was wearing.

Mary blushed and smiled. "I had it made by a tailor at Warsaw, who prepared the suits the imperial pages wore at that ball. I had not sufficient courage to enter this castle as a lady, only men living in it at the present time. I desired to enter your room without recognition or insult. I left my carriage at the neighboring village, and walked hither on foot. At the castle-gate, I inquired for Constant, your *valet de chambre*, and requested the servants to call him. I confided my secret to him, and he conducted me to this room. And thus, my beloved friend, I am here; I am lying at your feet, and imploring you to kill me if you do not love me, for I cannot live without your love!" She glided from the divan to the floor, and looked up to the emperor with clasped hands and imploring eyes.

Napoleon bent over her and drew her smilingly into his arms. "You shall live," he said, "for I love you, and pledge you my imperial word that I will never desert you!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE DANTZIC CHOCOLATE.

On the following day the emperor's face did not retain a trace of the gloom which had filled his marshals with so much uneasiness. His features were radiant with happiness, and a strange fire was burning in his dark-blue eyes. He ordered his guard to be drawn up in line in the castle-yard, and to the delight of the soldiers it was announced that Napoleon himself would command at the parade. Loud cheers and the constantly-repeated shout of "*Vive l'empereur!*" received him when, surrounded by his marshals, and with a smiling face, he walked down the broad steps of the palace.

"These soldiers are foolish children," said he, turning to Marshal Lannes. "Why are they cheering incessantly, as if they had not seen me for a year? Have I not been among them every day?"

"No, sire," said the marshal, who had regained his former good-humor and merry face, "no, sire; those brave boys really have not seen your majesty for a long while, and they are perfectly right to manifest their joy. The great Napoleon, whose face was our sun in so many battles and in so many countries, and whose smile, when we were hungry and thirsty, often satisfied our hunger and quenched our thirst, really was not here. In his place we have had during the last few weeks a grave and taciturn emperor, whom every one feared."

Napoleon laughed. "Were you also afraid, my old comrade?" he asked.

"I cannot say that I was," said Lannes, gayly, "but, nevertheless, I feel to-day as though a heavy burden had been removed from my heart. I can breathe more freely, inasmuch as I have back my excellent Napoleon in place of that morose emperor. The sun has risen once more for all of us!"

"Was I really as you pretend?" asked Napoleon, who was always delighted at the unceremonious words of his old comrade, and who permitted to Lannes that bluntness which he would not have tolerated in another.

The marshal bent closer to the emperor's ear. "Sire, your majesty will permit me to tell you

that you were shockingly morose and surly. We were beginning to feel anxious and weary. But it is all over now, and when I look at you to-day my heart is as glad as that of a lover who sees his sweetheart after a long separation. I should like to know what miracle has happened since yesterday, and what magician has arrived to dispel your discontent. I should be exceedingly grateful to your majesty if you would show him to me!"

"What an inquisitive fellow!" said the emperor, turning his eyes involuntarily to the window of the castle. He nodded almost imperceptibly, and laid his hand on his heart for a moment. The marshal's eyes had followed the glances of his master, and he beheld a strange object at one of the windows of the emperor's rooms. The curtain was cautiously drawn aside, and the beautiful head of a young lady was seen behind it.

"*Mort de ma vie!*" ejaculated Lannes, loudly and impetuously.

"Well, what is the matter?" asked Napoleon, turning hastily to him.

Lannes was still staring up at the window; but the charming person had already disappeared, and the curtains were closed again.

"Sire," faltered Lannes, in confusion, "sire, I believe I myself am bewitched; I beheld an apparition just now."

"Did your good wife appear to you?" asked Napoleon, laughing.

"Would she were such a fair-haired angel!" exclaimed Lannes, heaving a sigh. "But in that case, sire, I should very earnestly oppose her appearance at the windows of the imperial rooms—"

"Hush, you old babbler!" said Napoleon, laughing; "is it necessary, then, to confess every thing one has dreamed?" And, as he liked to do when in good-humor, he pulled the marshal's ear so violently that Lannes made a very wry face.

The emperor turned with a grave bearing to his soldiers, and the parade commenced. After it was over, he repaired to the castle, to work with his adjutant-general in his cabinet. Before doing so, however, he said to Marshal Lannes. "I wish you to dine with me to-day, and to-night I will play a game of *vingt-et-un* with you, Talleyrand, and Duroc; I must get even with you for yesterday. Do not forget, marshal—we shall dine together to-day!"

"Sire," said Lannes, joyfully, "were you to place a dish of the boiled ears of the Russians before me, I would eat them with great relish if you look at me as kindly as you are doing now!"

Napoleon laughed and ascended the palace staircase. An hour later, a dusty carriage rolled into the yard of Castle Finkenstein. It was Marshal Lefebvre, who, agreeably to the emperor's invitation, had arrived. The marshal felt somewhat embarrassed and anxious. This order of Napoleon to set out immediately on receipt of the dispatch, and repair to his headquarters at Finkenstein, had filled the conqueror of Dantzic with some apprehension, lest the emperor had summoned him to rebuke him for having granted such honorable terms to the Prussian garrison, and for permitting them to march out with their arms, instead of making them prisoners of war. The marshal therefore entered the anteroom with a face somewhat pale, and requested the officer in waiting to announce him.

"His majesty is at work in his cabinet," said the officer. "On such occasions no one is permitted to disturb him, unless he be a bearer of important dispatches."

"The emperor ordered me to report to him immediately on my arrival. Go, therefore, and announce me." The officer obeyed hesitatingly.

Napoleon was seated at a desk covered with maps and papers. Pointing at a map spread out on the table, he was just turning eagerly to his adjutant-general, Marshal Berthier. "Here—this is the point whither we have to drive the Russians; and there, on the banks of the Alle, they shall fearfully atone for the battle of Eylau. Well," he said, turning to the officer who had just entered, "what do you want?"

"Sire, Marshal Lefebvre asks your majesty to grant him an audience. He says your majesty summoned him here from Dantzic."

"He is right," said Napoleon, "and I am glad that the duke does not keep me in waiting. Tell the Duke of Dantzic that he is to dine with me."

"Sire," said the officer, "it is not a Duke of Dantzic, but Marshal Lefebvre, who applies for an audience."

The emperor darted one of his withering glances at him. "It seems, sir," he said gravely, "that you deem me incapable of creating a duke. Go," he added, "and inform the duke of my invitation. In fifteen minutes we shall dine."

The officer returned to the anteroom. "Well?" asked Lefebvre, quickly. "Does the emperor await me? May I enter?"

"Duke, his majesty invites you to dine with him, and requests you to wait only fifteen minutes."

Lefebvre, in his confusion, had not heard the title by which he was addressed. His mind was absorbed in the single thought whether or not the emperor was angry with him. He wished these fifteen minutes to pass quickly, and yet his heart

trembled at what might be in store for him. Precisely at the time appointed Grand Marshal Duroc entered to conduct Marshal Lefebvre to the dining-room. Lefebvre followed in silence. The heart of the brave soldier beat more violently than it had ever done in the battle-field.

The emperor had already taken his seat when Duroc and Lefebvre entered. Near him, behind their chairs, stood Marshal Lannes, the Prince de Benevento, and Marshal Berthier. Napoleon greeted Lefebvre with a friendly wave of his hand. "Welcome, duke," he exclaimed, "sit down here at my side!"

Lefebvre advanced and took the seat his majesty designated. The others sat down also. Dinner commenced: Napoleon ate his soup in silence, as he always did. Fixing his eyes with a smiling expression on a large pie, in the shape of a fortress, that was standing before him, "Do you recognize this, Duke of Dantzic?" he asked.

Lefebvre heard the ducal title this time, and looked bewildered at the emperor, whose anger he still feared. "Did your majesty speak to me?" he asked, bashfully.

"To be sure; did I not address you with the title of Duke of Dantzic?" replied Napoleon, laughing. "Well, tell me, now, do you know the fortress which this pie is intended to represent?"

"I believe," said the new duke, "the fortress of Dantzic."

"See, gentlemen, how familiar the duke is with his dear Dantzic," exclaimed Napoleon. "It is true, he ought to know it, for he had to take extraordinary pains to reduce it. Now let us eat little Dantzic as Lefebvre ate big Dantzic a few days ago."

The steward took the pie and presented it to the emperor. "Oh, no," said Napoleon, with a pleasant smile; "Duke of Dantzic, it behooves you to carve it, for it is your conquest."

Lefebvre's face beamed with joy, and he thanked the emperor with a grateful look. "Sire," he said, almost solemnly, plunging his knife into the pie, "I should like to be commissioned soon by your majesty to take another fortress. I should then remember this hour, and take it by assault or die!"

"Ah, you will not die so soon," exclaimed Napoleon; "let us take this fortress by assault. The Duke of Dantzic having opened the first breach, we will boldly follow." Turning to Lefebvre: "Do you like to eat chocolate, duke?" he asked.

Lefebvre looked at him, amazed at the strange question. "I do not know," he faltered, "I believe I like it."

"Well, then, I will give you a pound of Dantzic chocolate," said the emperor, smiling, "for as you took that city it is but equitable that you should receive a little souvenir of it. Roustan, bring me the small package lying on my desk."

Roustan, who at dinner always stood behind the emperor's chair, soon returned with a small oblong package. Napoleon took it, and, handing it to Lefebvre, said, "Take this, duke—small gifts keep up friendly feelings."

Lefebvre took the package, and, warmly thanking the emperor, put it into his pocket. A few minutes afterward Napoleon rose from the table.

"Sire," said Marshal Lannes, approaching him, "your majesty, perhaps, does not know all my failings. You are not aware that I am very inquisitive, and withal very fond of sweet things. Now I am anxious to know whether Dantzic chocolate is as good as Paris chocolate—I should like to taste it. Will not your majesty be so kind as to order the Duke of Dantzic to open his package of chocolate and let us taste it?"

Napoleon laughed. "Why, I cannot order him to give away what I have just given him," he said. "But a glance at the outside may show you whether it is good or not. If he will open it and let you see it, I have no objection."

The duke took the package from his pocket; he himself was desirous to discover what it contained; Lannes, Duroc, Talleyrand, and Berthier, surrounded him. The emperor stood at some distance, and looked smilingly at the group. Lefebvre broke the string and unfolded the wrapper. It contained nothing but a number of small printed papers; but these were valuable, being bank-notes to the amount of a hundred thousand dollars. Lefebvre, overjoyed, looked at the emperor. Duroc and Talleyrand smiled also, but Lannes exclaimed in a loud voice, "Forsooth, I should also like to have a pound of this Dantzic chocolate!* Sire, is there not somewhere another Prussian fortress manufacturing such an excellent article? Send me thither, and, I pledge you my word, I shall get my chocolate!"

Napoleon shrugged his shoulders. "No," he said, "there are really no Prussian fortresses that we can take; all are in our hands; only Colberg and Graudenz are holding out, and who knows how soon they will surrender? You will have no chance to obtain your chocolate in Prussia, Lannes,

* This scene is strictly historical. The army knew in what manner the emperor had rewarded Marshal Lefebvre, and it became a cant-phrase for soldiers who wished to borrow money of their comrades: "Have you any Dantzic chocolate?"

but I will give you and all my marshals an opportunity, I hope, on the battle-field."

"Ah," they exclaimed in joyful chorus, "then there will be a battle soon?"

"Yes," said Napoleon, gravely. "Let the fall of Dantzic be only a signal of fresh victories for us! The time of inaction is past. Let us invite the Emperor of Russia to a war-dance on the territory of his ally the King of Prussia. Possibly, the beautiful queen may take part in it, for she is said to be a fine dancer, and to have delighted the young officers of the guard at the balls given in the palace of Berlin. She is, moreover, a heroine, who, when her king had an army, witnessed the parades of the troops in the costume of an Amazon. I am, indeed, inquisitive, like Marshal Lannes—not, however, as to the quality of the chocolate, but as to this queen, who is said to be the most beautiful and amiable woman of all Germany. I am desirous to find out whether the rumor is true, and to see her face to face. But in order to do so a battle—a victory is necessary. Afterward I shall invite her to meet me, and I suppose she will bow to the conqueror of her country, notwithstanding her pride, and accept the invitation. Ah, she shall accustom herself to recognize me, whom she calls a usurper, as emperor, and peer of other sovereigns. Gentlemen, I count on your active cooperation. You, marshals, and my brave army, are to be the *postillons d'amour*, to conquer for me an interview with the beautiful queen! You are to wake up the Russians from their winter sleep, and bring them our morning greeting with cannon! All the preparations are completed. The Confederation of the Rhine, Italy, Spain, and France, have furnished us with troops, and we have now two hundred thousand enthusiastic and invincible soldiers, while Russia and Prussia together are scarcely possessed of half as many. They are, moreover, exhausted and demoralized. Let us renew the struggle; and when I say struggle, it means *victory!*"

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TILSIT.—NAPOLEON AND ALEXANDER.

A CRY of dismay resounded in the camp of the Prussians and Russians—of exultation in that of the French. Another battle had been fought, and Napoleon had won a brilliant victory. On the 14th of June, 1807, a decisive action had taken place between the French and the united army—the battle of Friedland had gained Napoleon a new laurel-wreath, and brought an overwhelming defeat upon unhappy Prussia. The Russians, enraged at the loss of the battle, furiously denounced Prussia, for the sake of which Russia had been involved in this war; they asked the Emperor Alexander to put an end to the disastrous and self-sacrificing war by making peace with France.

The same measure was urged by the adherents of the French party in the camp and in the suite of King Frederick William. They asserted that only unconditional submission, however humiliating it might be, could save what was still to be saved; that the king ought to throw himself at the feet of the victor of Friedland and implore him to restore his crown. Such was the advice of the discouraged and despairing—of those who always had regarded the war against France as a fatal mistake, and who now, amidst the general consternation, were overjoyed that their predictions had been fulfilled.

"Peace! peace with France!" was the cry resounding in the ears of the Emperor Alexander and of King Frederick William. Alexander promised that he would comply with the request. Frederick William listened to it in sullen silence. The queen, who had remained at Memel, and was no longer with her husband, veiled her head and wept.

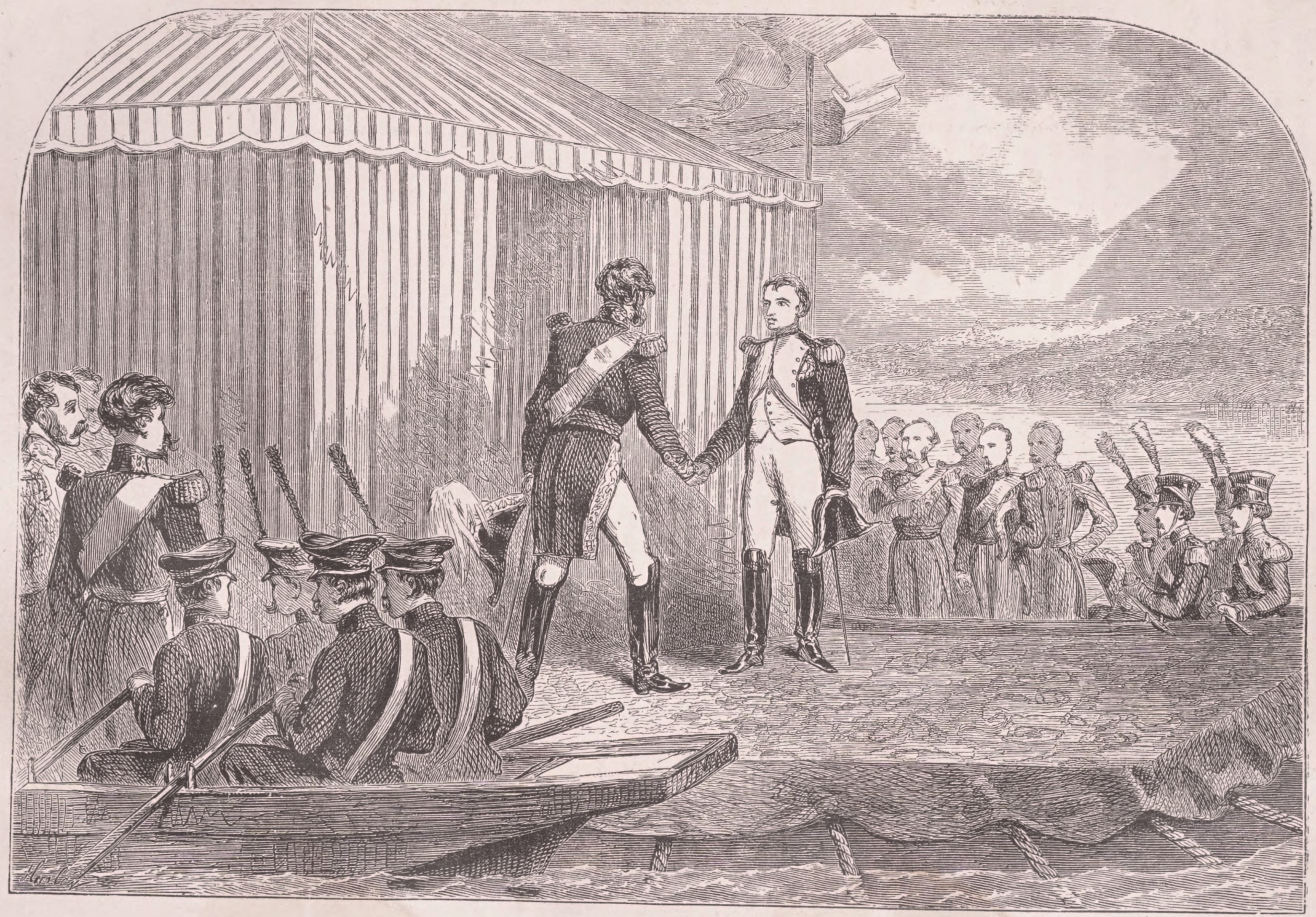
But Napoleon triumphantly thanked his army for this new and decisive victory.

"Soldiers," he said, "we are victorious. On the 5th of June we were attacked in our cantonments by the Russian army. The enemy had mistaken our inactivity. He perceived too late that our repose was that of the lion: he repents of having disturbed it. In the battles of Guttstadt and Heilsberg, and in that ever-memorable one of Friedland, in a campaign of ten days, we have taken one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, and seven colors. The killed, wounded, or made prisoners, are sixty thousand Russians. We have taken all the magazines, hospitals, ambulances, the fortress of Königsberg, the three hundred vessels which were in that port, laden with military stores, and one hundred and sixty thousand muskets, which England had sent to arm our enemies.

"From the Vistula to the Niemen we have come with the flight of the eagle. You celebrated at Austerlitz the anniversary of the coronation; this year, you celebrate that of the battle of Marengo, which put an end to the war of the second coalition.

"Frenchmen, you have been worthy of yourselves and of me. You will return to France crowned with laurels, and, after obtaining a glorious peace, which carries with it the guaranty of its duration, it is high time for our country to repose, protected from the malignant influence of England. My bounties shall prove to you my gratitude, and the extent of the love I feel for you."

Napoleon thus promised peace to his army, while thanking it for the new victory. And he had a right to do so, for peace and its conditions were now in his grasp. Alexander and Frederick William felt this, and hence they were under the necessity of making advances to the conqueror; they were obliged to sacrifice their pride and to conciliate their powerful enemy. Frederick William was still hesitating. The tears of his wife,



MEETING OF NAPOLEON AND ALEXANDER

the prayers and remonstrances of Hardenberg restrained him; he was unwilling to listen to the urgent appeals of Generals von Köckeritz and Zastrow, and of Field-Marshal von Kalkreuth, who, now that Dantzic had fallen, believed unconditional submission to be the only means of safety.

Alexander determined first on taking a decisive step. On the 24th of June he sent Prince Labanoff to the victor of Friedland, and expressed his desire for an interview with him. Napoleon complied with this request, and sent Grand-Marshal Duroc to the Emperor Alexander to inform him that he would meet him on the following day, the 25th of June, at noon. But the two emperors did not wish to see each other on a soil red with the blood of their soldiers, nor were the peace negotiations to be held on a territory hostile to the Emperor of the French. A river, whose waves buried in their depths the reminiscences of the past, was to be the neutral place of their meeting.

It was a clear midsummer-day; the earth was clad in the freshest verdure; not a cloud floated in the sky; not a breath of wind stirred the air, or ruffled the limpid waters of the Niemen. The river was silent, as though it was conscious of its importance, and felt that a great historical event was to take place on its tranquil surface. A large raft was moored by General Lariboissière, of the artillery, equidistant from and within sight of both banks. A pavilion was constructed with all the rich stuffs to be procured in the little town of Tilsit, for the reception of the two monarchs. This gorgeous pavilion seemed a palace descended from some fairy realm, and thousands of spectators gazed at it in surprise.

The two armies were ranged along the Niemen, their arms and uniforms flashing in the sun. On one bank were the lifeguards of Alexander, with their bearded faces and savage features; on the other, the guards of Napoleon, with their scarred faces, telling the story of many a victory. In the rear of the soldiers were thousands more, who had hastened to the banks of the Niemen to witness the interview of the two emperors. Shouts, laughter, and songs, resounded on both sides; the air was filled with a humming sound as from two immense swarms of bees. At times, greetings were sent across the river in a language mutually unintelligible. Suddenly, all this noise died away; the guards on both sides presented arms; the drums were beaten, and the bands played the national hymns of Russia and France. Amidst these jubilant notes the two emperors with their brilliant suites approached.

That small, vigorous man, whose delicate hand is holding firmly the bridle of his spirited white charger—he with the pale face and expansive forehead, crowned with light-brown hair; with impenetrable features, a cold, compressed mouth, and large, gloomy eyes—that man is Napoleon, Emperor of the French. Duroc, Berthier, Bessières, and Caulaincourt, form his suite, and follow him at a full gallop to the bank of the river.

That slender young man on the richly caparisoned black horse—that tall figure with smiling and handsome face, full of vigor, health, and vivacity—with soft, restless features; blue eyes radiant with enthusiasm, and crimson lips—is Alexander, Emperor of Russia. The Grand-duke Constantine, Generals Benningsen and Ouwaroff, Prince Labanoff, and Count Lieven, accompany him.

The two emperors dismount at the same time, and embark with their suites in the gondolas that are to convey them to the pavilion. The oarsmen keep time with their oars and the boats approach each other, reaching simultaneously the two staircases leading from the platform to the water. The two monarchs disembark at the same moment. Alexander and Napoleon stand face to face. For a moment they look at each other with inquiring glances, and then embrace in the most cordial manner.

This testimony of a frank reconciliation excited vehement applause among the spectators who lined the river; the French as well as the Russians stretched out their arms toward their newly-won friends on the other bank. "Peace!" shouted thousands. "Hail, ye friends and brethren! our enmity is over; our emperors have affectionately embraced each other, and like them their subjects will meet in love and peace! No more shedding of blood! Peace! peace!" The music joined with the exultant cries of the two nations, and the emperors stepped, keeping time with the bands, through the doors leading into the pavilion. They were alone. Only the eye of God could behold them. For a few moments they stood face to face, silent, and undecided which of them was to speak first, while the echoes of the music penetrated the heavily-curtained walls of the pavilion. Each of them seemed to be anxious to read the thoughts of the other in his face, and to look into the depths of his soul.

Napoleon's sonorous voice was the first to break the silence. "Why are we at war?" he asked with an inimitable smile, offering his hand to Alexander.

"It is true," exclaimed Alexander, as if awak-

ing from a dream; "why are we at war? If your grudge is against England, and against her alone—if your majesty hates me only because I am the friend of that country, I can sever the alliance, and we shall easily agree, for I have as much reason to complain of her as you have, and shall readily support you in every thing your majesty may decide upon undertaking against her."

"In that case," said Napoleon, quickly, "every thing can be arranged, and peace is a matter of certainty. England alone stood between us—perfidious, egotistic England, that is always interested only for herself, and is ready at any time to sacrifice her faithful and generous allies!"

"I have allowed England to deceive me a long while," exclaimed Alexander, vehemently; "for I once regarded that nation of traders as a nation of men, heroes, and profound diplomatists. But I was terribly undeceived. Those selfish shopkeepers amused me with fair but false promises; they care neither for my welfare nor for that of Europe, but only for their commerce. The egotism of Great Britain is equalled only by her narrow-minded avarice. I asked the British cabinet to guarantee a Russian loan, and they were impudent enough to refuse me, although they knew very well that I wished to negotiate it for the sole purpose of equipping an army, with which I intended to take the field more in the interest of England and Prussia, than in that of Russia. Faithful to my word, and to the treaties I had concluded, I nevertheless equipped my army and marched it into the field in order to join them. But where were my allies? Prussia could not add to my forces a single army, but a few corps, utterly demoralized by their misfortunes, and the assistance promised by England came so late that it failed in saving Dantzic. The English had taken their own time in appearing before that fortress; they had other matters to attend to in the Baltic; they had to make money by hunting up the merchant-vessels of other nations, and, in their brutality and avarice, they did not shrink from laying their rapacious hands even upon Russian ships! But while the English were taking unarmed vessels, and calculating their profits, and the Prussians were bewailing their misfortunes and dressing their wounds, I alone had to wage war and ingloriously to shed the blood of my poor soldiers for a cause that was hardly the cause of Russia. Ah, sire, I shall never forgive England for deserting me in the hour of danger, and for basely deceiving me by false promises!"

While Alexander was speaking, Napoleon had steadfastly fixed his eyes on him; he had looked through the restless, quivering face of the youthful emperor, into the recesses of his heart; and while Alexander, wholly absorbed in his wrongs, and alternately blushing and turning pale with indignation and grief, was uttering his reproaches, Napoleon said to himself, "Two sentiments of the speaker are predominant, and ought, therefore, to be flattered: spleen against allies, burdensome like Prussia, or selfish like England; and a very sensitive and deeply mortified pride. I must profit by them."

As soon as Alexander paused, Napoleon said in a mournful voice: "Your allies have taken advantage of your magnanimity, sire! They knew very well that the heir of Peter the Great was also the heir of his fiery spirit, and that it was only necessary to talk of a field of battle, and let him hear a warlike flourish, to make him draw the sword. Ah, sire, why was I not so fortunate as to be at your side? Why did we not take the field together! What heroic deeds would you have already performed! What laurels would not now adorn a head designed by Providence to wear them! It was your majesty's misfortune that you were united with allies who duped you for their own purposes—they were a king without a country and without soldiers, and a nation composed of greedy traders and stock-brokers, calculating whether glory would be profitable to them in pounds, shillings, and pence; and whether stocks would not fall if they fulfilled their engagements. Your majesty alone displayed nobleness, energy, and courage, in this triumvirate; but your friends were unworthy of your honorable conduct. Your majesty's mistake is to be solely attributed to generous sentiments carried to excess, and to misconceptions to which ministers, incompetent and bribed, have given rise. You were wrong to persist in patronizing ungrateful and jealous neighbors like the Germans; or in serving the interests of mere traders, like the English. God and history have intrusted a much more exalted task to you, and for this purpose such large and warlike forces have been given you. I and my marshals, I can assure you, are filled with admiration at the bravery of your soldiers, every one of whom fought like a hero."

"Ah," exclaimed Alexander, "this praise uttered by you, sire, is a balm for my wounds!"

Napoleon laid his hand softly on the shoulder of the young emperor, and looked him full in the face. "Sire," he said, "if we were to unite these two armies, which fought so valiantly against one another at Austerlitz, at Eylau, at Friedland, but who behaved like giants fighting blindfold—if we were to take the field hand in hand at their

head, we might divide the world between us, for its own peace and welfare. By waging war with France, Russia is spending her strength without any possible compensation; whereas, if the two unite in subjecting the East and the West, on land and sea, she would gain as much glory, and certainly more profit. Yes, sire, you would attain the glory which you have hitherto been vainly seeking with those who led you into a path in which you have met with nothing but defeats and disappointments. Heaven intended, perhaps, that you should pass through a school of suffering to make you see your false friends in their true character, and then cause you to turn to new friendships with the whole strength of your heroic soul. Sire, I offer you my hand, and, if you will accept it, I will lead you into a career as brilliant as the star-spangled firmament, and as fragrant as the laurels of the south. You shall see at least half the world at your feet. Sire, will you follow me?"

He fixed his fascinating glance on Alexander, and an unearthly radiance seemed to beam from his countenance. Alexander, dazzled by his aspect—carried away by the vigor of his language, and flattered also by hearing Napoleon give utterance to reflections on his allies which so well agreed with his own secret thoughts, extended his hands toward Napoleon.

"Here I am," he exclaimed, "lead me! Show me the career I am to pursue!"

Napoleon hastily seized the proffered hands, and, shaking them cordially, said with an energy which caused Alexander's heart to flutter, "Come, the world is ours!" He conducted Alexander quickly and silently to the round-table in the middle of the pavilion, on which several rolls of paper were lying. Unfolding the largest, and spreading it on the table, he said, "Sire, look here. This is a map of the world. There is Asia, which is placed at the side of Russia, like a pillow on which to rest your head; there is Persia, with her treasures; the vast Chinese empire, with its industry and commerce; there is Hindostan, with her immense wealth, and a population sighing for deliverance from the British yoke. Here below you behold Africa, with her dreary deserts, and the three Barbary states, which lately again plundered French vessels, and upon which I have sworn to inflict summary punishment. I shall not now speak of America and Australia. That is a world which has first to pass through the children's disease of republicanism; after it has recovered from it, both of us will be ready to inoculate it with monarchical principles. But here is Europe! Your majesty, look at this motley chaos of colors and states, of big and little thrones, lying between France and Russia. We are their bulwarks on the east and west; why should we not rule over them? We are able to do so by joining hands over the heads of all these states. If Russia desires to be the sincere ally of France, nothing will be more easy; we shall change the face of this part of Europe; we shall break the chains separating these states and nations from each other in the east as well as in the west. There will be but one shepherd and one flock, and the Emperor of the Occident and the Emperor of the Orient will give laws to the world!"

"Ah," exclaimed Alexander, enthusiastically, "the will of my ancestor, Peter the Great, revives in the mouth of Napoleon the Great!"

Napoleon smiled. "And what Catharine the Great planned," he said, "will be accomplished by Alexander the Great—the consolidation of the empire of the East! Sire, a courier brought me important news this morning. My ally and friend, Sultan Selim, has been hurled from his throne by the daggers of conspirators. His overthrow has just set me at liberty in regard to my alliance with the Porte."

"I also heard this intelligence to-day," said Alexander, smiling; "the sultan's throne is vacant; Turkey awaits a new sovereign."

"Yes," exclaimed Napoleon, "but it is not necessary that this sovereign should be a Mussulman. The crescent on St. Sophia's accuses the Christian powers of cowardice and perfidy, and it is time to reëstablish the cross on it. I did think that one might make something of those Turks, restore to them some energy, teach them to make use of their national courage; but it was an illusion. It is time to put an end to an empire which can no longer hold together, and to prevent its spoils from contributing to increase the power of England. I ask but a small part of Turkey for myself; she is too remote from France, she does not belong to the empire of the Occident. But I remember that Catharine the Great had placed her on the map of the new world she was constructing, and I read in the eyes of your majesty that you have not forgotten that map!"

"Sire, you not only read in my eyes, but you look also into my heart!" exclaimed Alexander; "like a magician, you lay your hands on the secrets of my thoughts, that never found words; you teach them to assume a definite shape, and impart the faculty of speech to them."

"I show you the way of glory, which your allies had taken pains to conceal," said Napoleon, smiling. "Your majesty anxiously desires to see it, and those perfidious men tried to mislead you.

The portal opens to you now, sire, and I already behold the noble Alexander entering it."

"Oh," murmured Alexander, placing his hands on his head, "my brain turns dizzy; it seems to me as though it were on fire."

"Sire," exclaimed Napoleon, in a powerful voice, "we are destined to give everlasting peace to the world, and woe to those who try to hinder us! England would like to do so as to myself, and Turkey desires as much in regard to you. Sire, let us unite, therefore, against these two enemies, and give efficiency to our alliance. We must enlarge our territory. I see in the north an obstacle to your progress; Sweden is watching your majesty with a jealous eye, and will regard an alliance with me as a declaration of war. Well, then, wage war against Sweden!"

"Sire," said Alexander, in dismay, and confused by those novel ideas passing so brilliantly before him, "the King of Sweden is my brother-in-law and ally!"

"For that reason, let him follow the changes of your policy," replied Napoleon, "or let him take the consequences. Sweden may be an ally for the moment, but she is your geographical enemy. St. Petersburg is too near the frontiers of Finland. The fair Russians of St. Petersburg must not again hear from their palaces the cannon of the Swedes. Proclaim war against the Swedish king, and take Finland as a compensation. And as you must be strong in the south as well as in the north, take also at once some portion of the provinces of the Danube. However, as it is probable that the Turks will not give up any thing, let us wage war against them. I will assist you, and afterward the partition will take place. Look here," added Napoleon, quickly, drawing with his finger a line across the map, "this is the inheritance that Turkey will leave us. You take Bessarabia, Moldavia, Wallachia, and Bulgaria, as far as the Balkan. I should naturally wish for the maritime provinces, such as Albania, Thessaly, Morea, and Candia. It is true Austria would object to such an arrangement, but we should offer her indemnities in Bosnia and Servia, to be made the appanage of one of her archdukes. I have thus laid before you a rapid sketch of our new world, sire; the question now is whether you like it—what you think of it."

"Your majesty," exclaimed Alexander, enthusiastically, "I feel like a man who has looked at the sun, and whose eyes are dazzled. But I shall become accustomed to this brilliant light, and then be able to look more reasonably at the wonderful picture which your majesty has unrolled. But, then, I shall need your explanations and assistance, and I therefore request you not to let to-day's interview be the last, but rather the commencement of many happy hours!"

"We have to settle many things yet," said Napoleon, gravely; "it is, therefore, my heart-felt desire that we see each other as often as possible; hence, I should like to ask a favor of your majesty."

"Ah, sire, then you will overwhelm me with kindness," exclaimed Alexander; "will you permit me, your vanquished foe, to confer a favor upon you?"

"I should like to request your majesty to leave the miserable hamlet where you are now living, and establish yourself in the little town of Tilsit. It is true I am residing there, and I am said to be your enemy; but we may neutralize the town, that your majesty may be there also, and that I may be so happy as to see you every day."

"Sire, I shall transfer my quarters to Tilsit in the course of the day," replied Alexander, joyfully.

"But I have made only half my request. It is not enough for you to reside at Tilsit; you must also *live* there. I have been informed that your household is not with you. I, therefore, ask your majesty to let me be your host, and to permit me to receive you as a guest at my table."

"I accept your hospitality," said Alexander, smiling. "I hope it will be the beginning of a true and lasting friendship. But," he added, in an embarrassed manner, "I have to ask a favor of you. Sire, when I accept your generous hospitality, it must extend to the unfortunate King of Prussia. He is my ally; in an hour of rashness and sentimental enthusiasm, perhaps, I swore faithful and lasting friendship to him."

"At the tomb of Frederick the Great, in presence of the beautiful queen," said Napoleon, shrugging his shoulders. "It was the dream of a generous heart, sire."

"But I must realize at least a part of this dream, sire. The King of Prussia is with me at my headquarters; he is waiting for the decision of his fate."

"He has brought it upon himself; let him bear it now," exclaimed Napoleon, sternly. "I do not expect, hope, or ask any thing of him. He is able neither to help nor to injure me. The waves of his destiny are rolling over him; they will engulf him, and I do not mean to save him."

"But I do," exclaimed Alexander; "I must, for my honor is at stake. I cannot allow the king to be utterly ruined without dishonoring myself. Before passing from one system of politics

to another, it is incumbent upon me to secure my ally and to protect his crown."

"His estates belong to me; as to his crown, I will leave it to him," said Napoleon, carelessly. "Let him reside at Memel and review there his fifteen thousand soldiers. But I comprehend why you in your generosity intercede for him, and refuse to abandon him. Tell me, therefore, your majesty, what I am to do for the King of Prussia."

"Above all, sire, I request you to receive him, and to let him lay his wishes and demands before you."

"Well, then," said Napoleon, "I request your majesty to appear with the King of Prussia here in this pavilion to-morrow. Let him participate in our interview. Although he has so long been an implacable enemy of mine, I shall willingly yield him as much as possible, but I do so only for your majesty's sake; it is a sacrifice I make to your honor and magnanimity. Be kind enough to remember this. Sire, I might dissolve Prussia, and cause her to disappear forever. I shall permit her to remain a state, because your majesty desires me. But it is true I cannot grant her the old frontiers; she will have to sacrifice much in order to retain something."

"She will be content with this something," exclaimed Alexander. "Your majesty will confer with the king himself as to the extent of his future states."

"You wish me to do so. The King of Prussia, therefore, may have a part in our negotiations," said Napoleon. "That is to say, in the official negotiations, but not in our confidential interviews. —You and I," he added, "can understand each other better if we treat directly than by employing our ministers, who frequently deceive or misunderstand us; and we shall advance business more in an hour than our negotiators in days. Between you and me there must be no third person, if we are to accomplish our purpose."

"No one shall be between us," said Alexander, delighted at so skilful a flattery. The two sovereigns then walked hand in hand to the doors of the pavilion.

"To-morrow, then," said Napoleon, with a gentle nod.

"To-morrow, I and the King of Prussia will be here," said Alexander, with a smile.

Both emerged from the pavilion. The guards and the people received them again with shouts in which the bands joined. Alexander turned to the Grand-duke Constantine, his brother, and seizing his hand to introduce him to Napoleon, he exclaimed enthusiastically, "What a man! what a genius! Ah, my brother, had I but known him sooner, how many blunders he might have spared me! What great things we might have accomplished together!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

QUEEN LOUISA.

While Frederick William repaired with Alexander to the headquarters of the army, the queen and her faithful attendants remained at Memel. There she received the news of the battle of Friedland, and bewailed the misfortunes and disgrace of Prussia. The king was not with her, to comfort her; he was still at the mill of Puktupöhnen, where, after the disastrous battle, he and the Emperor Alexander had retired. Alexander had left for Tilsit. The king had refused to accompany him, preferring to remain at his humble lodgings, far from the proud conqueror. While Alexander was the perpetual companion of Napoleon, a daily guest at his table, without returning this hospitality, indulging with him in fantastic dreams about the future political system of the world, Frederick William pursued his lonely path gravely and silently, only looking for means to relieve as much as possible the sufferings his subjects were undergoing, and, by remonstrances and arguments, trying to protect his monarchy from utter destruction.

Never did Frederick William stoop to flatter his enemy—never did he bow to him in hypocritical submission. He could not help treating him as the conqueror of his states, but he refused to degrade himself by base servility. His first interview with Napoleon was short, and not very pleasant. Frederick William tried to prove to his adversary that it was he who had brought about the war by invading the territory of Anspach, and thereby compelling Prussia to declare war. Napoleon listened to this charge, shrugged his shoulders, and merely replied that the cabinet of Berlin, often warned to beware of the intrigues of England, had committed the fault of not listening to his friendly counsel, and that to this cause alone were to be ascribed the disasters of Prussia. Since then, Frederick William, like Alexander, was a daily guest at Napoleon's table, but he sat there in silence, sad, and absorbed in his reflections, taking but little part in the conversation, and, when he did so, assuming a cold, formal manner, while Alexander and Napoleon chatted unreservedly and pleasantly.

The king had also been constantly at the side of the two emperors in their long rides, and at the reviews, but always as an ominous shadow in the light of their new friendship—always as the mournful and warning spirit of memories which Alexander would have forgotten, because now they were a reproach and an accusation against him. And Frederick William took no pains to palliate this reproach, or to disguise his sadness with a veil of politeness. Abrupt in his whole bearing, he did not condescend for a moment to play the part of courtier. Accompanying the emperors, the king was by no means ready to comply with their whims; if they wished to ride at a full gallop, he moved only at a quick trot, and politeness compelled them to remain with him. When they returned from their excursions, Napoleon and Alexander vaulted quickly from their horses, and walked hand-in-hand toward the door, but Frederick William alighted slowly, and thus obliged Napoleon, whose guest he was, to wait for him. The king frequently made his crowned companions stand, regardless of the rain; and it happened more than once that the emperors, while waiting for him, were thoroughly drenched. When he was conferring with Napoleon as to the future frontiers of his states, Frederick William did not assume a suppliant tone, but spoke with the bearing of an incensed and insulted sovereign, whom his adversary was robbing of his rights, and who scarcely succeeded in restraining his indignation.

And the king had sufficient reasons to be sad and irritable. He saw that the storm which had so long cast its bolts upon Prussia, would utterly destroy her. Napoleon was about to revenge himself for the unpleasant hours she had latterly caused him. He was willing, indeed, as he had pledged himself to Alexander, to leave Frederick William his crown, but he did not intend to restore him his states. He needed Prussia for the new kingdom of Westphalia, and for rewarding his friends and allies. The king was to retain nothing but a small part of the province of Prussia, and Königsberg was to be his capital.

Frederick William, stricken by this new and terrible humiliation menacing him, looked anxiously around for assistance. He felt lonely, deserted, and betrayed; he felt as though there was no comfort, no hope for him. His soul turned with unutterable yearning toward the queen; she was the pillar against which he desired to lean, that he might not sink to the ground; she was his energy, his strength, his determination, and when she was at his side, he felt strong enough to brave any calamity. His love longed for her, and political considerations soon required her presence.

"Beseech the queen to come hither," said Alexander to him; "she alone is able now to do something for Prussia. Her beauty, her eloquence, her amiability, and her understanding, will be more likely to obtain concessions from Napoleon than any thing else. It will touch his magnanimity that the noble queen, whom he has so often reviled, condescends to come to him to implore his mercy. This high-minded resolution will make a deep impression upon his generosity, and he will grant twenty times more than I am able to obtain by my daily and most urgent solicitations."

The king still hesitated. Owing to his sense of honor and his conscientiousness, he shrank from doing what his heart so intensely desired; and, before making up his mind, he wished to hear the views of his friends, General von Köckeritz and Field-Marshal Kalkreuth, who were carrying on the peace negotiations with Talleyrand. Both of them shared the opinion of the Emperor Alexander; both of them exclaimed: "The queen is our last hope! She alone is able to make an impression upon the inexorable conqueror, and Napoleon possibly may not refuse her what he declined granting to your majesty and to us. It is necessary for the welfare of Prussia that her majesty should come hither."

The king delayed no longer. He wrote to the queen, and requested her to come to his headquarters at Puktupöhnen. He told her it was her sacred duty to make a last effort for the preservation of Prussia—that every thing would be lost if she failed to move Napoleon by her supplications and remonstrances. A courier hastened immediately with the letter to Memel. When Louisa read it, a pallor overspread her features. Uttering a cry of excruciating anguish, she dropped the paper into her lap, and buried her face in her hands.

Madame von Berg, who had heard the loud sobs of the queen in the adjoining room, hastened to console or weep with her. Louisa did not hear her come; she was still absorbed in grief; only incoherent lamentations fell from her lips, and her tears fell on the letter lying in her lap. Madame von Berg knelt, and implored her with the eloquence of devotedness and affection to let her share her queen's grief—to tell her what new calamity had occurred.

Louisa looked with sorrowful eyes at the friend kneeling before her. "You ask me what calamity has befallen me! Read and know!" she said, handing the letter to her lady of honor,

and, at the same time, raising her from her knees.

While Madame von Berg was reading, the queen rose; and with her head thrown back, and her eyes turned upward, she commenced slowly pacing the room. "Well?" she asked, when Madame von Berg, with a deep sigh, had laid the letter on the table. "Did you read it? And do you comprehend my grief now?"

"I do, your majesty," she said, mournfully.

"Caroline," exclaimed the queen, in an outburst of despair, "I am to bow to this man, who has insulted me so infamously! I am to step like a beggar before him who has slandered my honor before the whole world, who has crushed my heart, and wounded my soul in such a manner that it can never, never recover! I tell you, he will be the cause of my death! On the day when I read those calumnies which he contrived to have printed about me—on that day I felt a pang in my heart as if a dagger had been plunged into it! Ah, would I could die this hour, before sinking into this new humiliation! Ah, my soul is willing to bow to the great, the beautiful, the sublime—but not to him—not to that proud man who is trampling mankind in the dust; who has rendered King Frederick William so wretched, robbing him of his states and of his majesty, slandering his queen, and oppressing his people. Caroline, think of it! I am to meet politely him who has robbed my children of their inheritance, and caused me so many sleepless nights, so many tears, so many pangs! With a smile I am to conceal my anguish; and, under a magnificent costume, my wounded heart! As it behooves every lady, though no queen, I am not to wait for him to come to me, but I am to go to him! I am to force my visit on him—I am to court his favor! Ah, it is too much—too cruel!"

Raising her arms impetuously to heaven, she exclaimed in the energy of her grief, "Wilt Thou have no mercy upon me, my God? Ah, let me die! Let me die, to escape this new disgrace menacing me! I am a poor, tormented woman! I ask nothing of Thee but death! Wilt Thou refuse me this only wish?" She sank on her knees, her arms and eyes still raised toward heaven, as if she expected that her prayer would be granted. She slowly dropped her arms, and hung her head with a groan. Madame von Berg, in tears and with folded hands, was praying in a low voice.

A long pause ensued. The queen rose from her knees; her face was calm and her tears had gone! but around her eyes a quiver was still seen, and at times a sigh escaped her breast. "It is over now," she said in a low voice, "the struggle is over! Pardon my impassioned grief, Caroline; My poor heart sometimes refuses to submit to the bridle of affliction. But I must be docile and patient, and learn to obey without a murmur."

There was something so touching in the tone and manner in which the queen uttered these words, in the glance with which she gave her hand to her friend, that Madame von Berg was unable to conceal her tears. She took Louisa's hand and pressed it to her lips.

"Do not weep, Caroline," said the queen. "I have paid my tribute to human nature; I have wept, but now I will be strong and do my duty. Stand by me, and console me by your calmness and fortitude. I must set out in an hour; let us reflect, therefore, what preparations ought to be made."

"Then you will really go, your majesty?" asked Madame von Berg, sadly.

"Majesty!" ejaculated the queen, almost indignantly. "Is this reverence intended to deride me? Where is my majesty?"

"In your sovereign eyes, Louisa," said Madame von Berg—"in your great and noble heart, which masters its grief and submits to duty. It beams gloriously around your head, which, though it may bow to your adversary, will never be humbled by him. But, consider, are you not about to impose upon yourself, in your generous devotedness, a sacrifice which is greater, it may be, than the reward? Napoleon is not a magnanimous man; he lacks true chivalry, and he would delight, perhaps, to scorn the august lady who humbles herself so painfully, and who thereby affords him a triumph. There is a voice in my heart, warning me against this plan; it is repugnant to my womanly feelings that my noble queen is suddenly to descend into the petty affairs of politics. I am afraid your beauty, your understanding, your grace, are to be abused to fascinate your enemy, and to wrest from him by persuasion what is the sacred right and property of your king and of your children, and what I believe cannot be wrested from the conqueror through intercession, but by the king and his ally, the Emperor Alexander, by means of negotiations, or, if they should fail, by force and conquest."

"Hush, hush, Caroline," exclaimed the queen anxiously. "Do not repeat to me my own thoughts; do not give expression to my doubts and fears! I think and feel like you. But I must go nevertheless; I must do what my king and husband asks me to do. He wrote me that it is my sacred duty to control my feelings, and come to him—that every thing is lost if I do not

succeed in influencing Napoleon by my remonstrances. It shall not be said that I neglected my duty, and refused to yield, when the welfare of my children and of my husband was at stake. It is a trial imposed upon me now, and I am accustomed to make sacrifices. God may reward my children for the sufferings I am now undergoing; the tears of their mother may remove adversity from them when I am no more. Oh, my children and my husband, if you are only happy, I shall never regret having suffered and wept! And who knows," she added, "whether God may not have mercy upon me, and whether, by the humiliation I am about to make, I may not really promote the welfare of my king, my children, and my beloved people? Oh, Caroline, I feel a joyful foreboding that it will be so! It will touch the proud conqueror to see a lady, a wife, a mother, who was once a queen, and is now but a sad, afflicted woman, appear before him and humbly ask him to have mercy on her children and her country. Even though he should feel no generosity, he will feign it, and, in his ambition to be admired by the world, he will grant me what he would have refused under other circumstances. The hearts of men rest in the hands of God. He will move this man's heart!"

Scarcely touching the floor with her feet, Louisa glided across the room to the piano. She slowly touched the keys, and with upturned glances she indicated her thoughts, singing in a joyful voice the hymn commencing with the words:

In all thy ways—in grief, in fear,
O troubled heart! rely
On that all-faithful, ceaseless care
Of Him who rules the sky. *

CHAPTER XXIX.

BAD TIDINGS.

Frederick William and Louisa sat hand in hand in the small, wretched room of the mill at Puktupöhnen. They were not a royal couple, but a pair of lovers, thanking God that they were again united, and could read in each other's eyes the love and constancy that animated them. The king, generally taciturn and laconic, found words at this hour; his happiness made him eloquent, and he unbosomed himself unreservedly, telling of his apprehensions and forebodings. "But now," he said, pressing Louisa's hand to his lips, "now you are here, and affairs will assume a more hopeful aspect. Your eyes will strengthen and your voice will encourage me. Alas! I stand greatly in need of your presence, for my soul is well-nigh crushed. I have no longer sufficient strength to withstand my misfortunes and humiliations—they oppress my life day and night, leaving me no rest. At times, when I sat at the dinner-table between the two emperors, and gazed at the sombre features of Napoleon, in contrast with the good-natured face of Alexander, and listened to their jests, I felt as though I ought to interrupt them by an expression of anger, and say to them, 'It is a shame for you to laugh when misfortune is in your company, and seated by your side.' But I suppressed my feelings. Oh, Louisa, I was all alone in my agony. Now you are here, I am no longer alone!" He threw his arms around the queen's neck, and pressed her against his heart, as though afraid she might also be wrested from him. "Oh, beloved Louisa," he whispered, "you are my consolation and my hope; do not desert me—do not give me up—now that the whole world seems to desert me!"

The queen encircled his neck in her arms and kissed him. "I shall always stay with you," she said, smiling in her tears; "so long as my heart throbs it belongs to you, my king, my beloved husband!" They remained locked in an embrace. Their thoughts were prayers, and their prayers love.

A carriage rapidly driving up to the door, and rattling the windows, roused them. "It is Alexander, who comes to pay you a visit," said the king, rising. "I will meet him."

But before he had reached the door, it opened, and the Emperor Alexander appeared. "Ah, I succeeded in surprising both of you," he said, with a good-humored smile. Bowing respectfully to the queen, he added: "I trust your majesty will forgive my entering without announcement, but I longed to see my noble friend Frederick William. God and His saints be praised that the sun has at length risen on us, and that your majesty has arrived!"

"Yes, sire, I have arrived," said Louisa, mournfully; "however, I do not bring the sun with me. Night surrounds us, and it seems to me I cannot see a single star in the darkness."

Alexander became grave; he gazed long and searchingly at the pale face of the queen, and a sigh escaped his breast. "Sire," he said, turning to the king, "can we really make peace with

* Befiehl Du Deine Wege
Und was Dein Herze Kränkt,
Der allertreu'sten Pflege
Dess, der den Himmel lenkt.
* * * *
Paul Gerhard.

the man who, in the course of a few weeks, changed into the lily the red rose that once adorned the face of the noblest and most beautiful lady? Can we really forgive him for wringing tears from our august queen?"

"Fate does not ask us whether we can," said the king, gloomingly. "It tells us only what we must. In my heart I shall never make peace with the man who, although a great captain, is no great man; else he would be less cruel. But God has given him the power, and we must all bow to him."

"But it is not necessary to humble ourselves before him," exclaimed the queen. "Amid our misfortunes we must keep ourselves erect; and if we perish, we ought to do so with unsullied honor."

"But why perish?" said Alexander. "We are shipwrecked, it is true, and we are now drifting on the waves, but we must save ourselves. Every one must try, to the best of his ability, to do so; he must grasp at the first thing that falls into his hands—at a plank, at a straw. Some fortunate rope may at last save us, and draw us to the shore. We shall then build a new ship, and man her with fresh hands. Do you agree with me, my dear fellow-sufferers?"

"Sire," said Louisa, in a low and mournful voice, "you are magnanimous. You call yourself our fellow-sufferer. And yet the tempest shipwrecked us alone."

"By no means," exclaimed Alexander; "I have also suffered; all my hopes, wishes, and ambition went down. But I did not wish to be drowned, and I stretched out my arms for something to support me. Do you know what I found to sustain me? The Emperor Napoleon! Oh, he is a strong support."

"I have heard, sire, your majesty has of late become an ardent admirer of Napoleon," said the queen, in a tremulous voice.

"Yes," exclaimed Alexander, enthusiastically, "Napoleon is a genius, a demi-god; the great Alexander of antiquity has risen from the dead. He realizes the myths of the ancient heroes. I repeat it to him every day, and, thank God, he believes me!"

The queen cast a surprised and inquiring glance on him. A singular smile played on his lips. "Yes," he repeated, "Napoleon believes me! He is convinced of the sincerity of my admiration, and he is right. I love him as my master—as my teacher—as the great ideal that I will endeavor to imitate!"

"Oh, sire," sighed the queen, reproachfully, "you give me pain!"

"You hate him, then?" asked Alexander, quickly.

"No," replied Louisa, gently, "I do not hate him, but I cannot love and adore him. Only the good can make the world happy, and Napoleon has no good intentions toward the nations. In his unmeasured ambition he thinks of himself and his individual interests only. We may admire, but cannot love him."

"We must, we can love him!" exclaimed Alexander. "He is an instrument in the hand of Providence, that seems to have armed him to rule the world. I love Napoleon," he added, in a whispering tone, "and I am sure he believes in and returns my love. He overwhelms me with attentions and favors; we have long conversations every day; we take our meals together, and make many excursions. A shower surprised us yesterday and gave us a thorough wetting. How amiably the great Napoleon behaved toward me! how kindly he took care of me! He would not even let me to go to my quarters to change my dress, but conducted me himself to his room and lent me his linen and clothing. As a souvenir, he presented me with a superb dressing-case of gold which I chanced to admire. I shall always preserve this gift as a token of his friendship."

He paused a moment, and cast a quick glance at the royal couple. Frederick William had turned toward the window, and seemed to look intently at the sky. Louisa had cast down her eyes, and her features expressed a profound melancholy. The same strange smile played on the emperor's face, but neither the king nor the queen noticed it. He kissed Louisa's hand and asked: "Will your majesty graciously permit me to show you that beautiful dressing-case?"

The queen withdrew her hand almost indignantly. "I thank your majesty," she said, "I am not very anxious to see the gifts of Napoleon."

Alexander approached nearer to her. "That is right," he whispered hastily, "be angry with me—regard me as a faithless man—a renegade, you will yet be undeceived!"

"Sire," said the queen, "sire—"

"Hush!" whispered Alexander, receding from her and approaching the king. "Your majesty knows how much I have at heart your friendship as well as your welfare—what pains I take to soften the heart of the conqueror, and to inspire him with more lenient sentiments toward Prussia. I improve every opportunity; I try to profit by my private interviews to obtain better terms for you; as, for instance, I succeeded yesterday in persuading him to leave you the fortress of Graudenz."

"I thank your majesty," said Frederick William, gravely. "But, as far as I know, Napoleon did not conquer and occupy that fortress at all; it held out bravely and faithfully to the day of the armistice; it remained mine, and I do not see by what right he claims it."

"Oh, your majesty," exclaimed Alexander, carelessly, "the victor claims the right of taking every thing he pleases. You must remember that, now and hereafter—yes, hereafter," repeated Alexander, laying stress on the word. "I was glad, therefore, that I succeeded in preserving Graudenz to you. Unfortunately, however, I did not succeed in recovering the frontiers. Our august queen must use her eloquence, and I have no doubt that the noblest of women will succeed in bringing about what we and our ministers failed to accomplish. But in order that your majesty may become fully aware of the important interests that are at stake, of the dangers menacing Prussia, and how urgently she needs the assistance of her queen, I have brought the 'ultimatum' of Napoleon. He dictated it to-day, to Talleyrand in my presence, and I requested him to give me a copy. Will you permit me, sire, to communicate it to you?"

"It is always better to know our fate, and look it full in the face," said the king, slowly. "I request your majesty, therefore, to read it."

"And will you also permit me?" asked Alexander, turning to the queen.

Louisa gently nodded. "The king is right," she said, "we should know the worst. Let us sit down, if your majesty please."

She took a seat on the sofa; the emperor and her husband occupied the easy-chairs on the other side of the table.

"I implore your majesties, however, to listen without interrupting me," said Alexander, drawing a paper from his bosom. Glancing over it, he added: "Napoleon demands, above all, that Prussia shall cede to him the whole territory on the right of the Niemen, the city of Memel, and the district extending as far as Tilsit, for he asserts that this is the natural frontier of Russia. He requires your majesty, further, to cede your whole territory on the left of the Elbe to France, for he regards the Elbe as also the natural frontier of the Prussian kingdom. He stipulates expressly that the district of Hildesheim shall not be included in the territory of your majesty on the right of the Elbe, for he desires this district to form part of the new kingdom of Westphalia, which he has resolved to organize. But to compensate you for this loss, he will prevail upon Saxony to cede to you a territory on the right of the Elbe, equivalent to the district of Memel. Napoleon demands the Polish provinces of Prussia for the new kingdom of Poland to be organized; but your majesty is to keep Pomerelia and the districts of Kulm, Elbing, and Marianwerder. The district of the Netze, as well as the canal of Bromberg and Thorn, will be taken from Prussia; Dantzic, with its surroundings, is to be constituted a free—I believe, a free German city, under the joint protection of Saxony and Prussia. Russia is to cede the island of Corfu to France. This is Napoleon's 'ultimatum,'" said Alexander, laying the paper on the table. "These, queen, are the conditions which our majesty ought to endeavor to render less rigorous, and if possible, to cancel altogether. What do you think of them, your majesty?"

"I think that if we cannot avert our fate, we must submit to it," replied Frederick William in a hollow voice, "but that recourse ought to be had to every means to render it less offensive. For if I am compelled to sign these propositions, I sign the ruin of Prussia."

The queen had listened to the words of the emperor, with breathless attention, and fixed her eyes inquiringly on her husband. On hearing his mournful reply, she sank back exhausted, and tears flowed down her cheeks.

"Your majesty sees how necessary it was that you should come hither," said Alexander to the queen. "You have a great task to perform here. You alone are able to save Prussia!"

Louisa shook her head. "Sire," she said, "he who was arrogant enough to draw up such an 'ultimatum,' is also cruel enough to withstand all solicitation. I have come because my king commanded me; faithful to the duty intrusted to me, I shall try to mitigate our fate, but I do not hope to be successful."

"In these times, nothing can be promised with any degree of certainty; we can only hope for the best," said Alexander. "We must not relax in our efforts to bring about a change in these terms. But I have not yet communicated to you all the demands of the Emperor Napoleon."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the king, with a bitter laugh. "Then there is something still left for Napoleon to take from me?"

"Yes, sire, he demands that your majesty dismiss your minister, Von Hardenberg."

"Hardenberg!" exclaimed the queen, sadly—"the king's most faithful and devoted servant! Oh, your majesty knows him—the generous zeal that animates him, and the noble purposes that he pursues."

"I know him and have tried to lessen Napo-

leon's hostility," said Alexander, shrugging his shoulders. "But my efforts were unsuccessful. He insists on Hardenberg's removal, and I cannot but advise your majesty, urgently, to comply. I cannot conceal from you that the Emperor Napoleon has declared to me to-day, that he would make no peace, but wage war with Prussia for forty years rather than consent that Hardenberg, his implacable adversary, should remain your minister for a single day."

"That is too much," exclaimed the queen, indignantly. "Let Napoleon dismember Prussia, since he has the power, but he must not compel us to select or dismiss our servants according to his *bon plaisir*."

"He must not! but he can do so," said the king gloomily, "and as Napoleon does every thing he can, of course he compels me to undergo a fresh humiliation. I must restore peace to my poor, bleeding country; I cannot continue the war. If, therefore, he insists on Hardenberg's removal as a first condition of the peace, I must comply."

"But it is impossible to inform such a faithful and devoted servant of the state so abruptly of his ignominious removal from office," exclaimed the queen, mournfully.

"No," said Alexander, "that is unnecessary. Minister von Hardenberg will send in his resignation. I have had a long conference with him, and, in consequence of it, he has repaired hither to request your majesty to grant him an audience. May I call him?"

"If your majesty desires me I will receive him in your presence and in that of the queen," said Frederick William, walking to the door; he opened it, and cried: "Minister von Hardenberg!"

A few minutes afterward Hardenberg entered the room. The serene expression of his fine, manly features had not disappeared; calm, and kindly as usual, he approached their majesties, and bowed to them respectfully, yet with the pride of a man conscious of his own dignity. He took the liberty, therefore, to violate etiquette, and to speak without being spoken to. "Sire," he said, turning to the Emperor Alexander, "I thank you for being so kind as to procure me an audience with his majesty, and as I may hope that you have communicated to my king and master the reason why I applied for it, I shall have but little to say. Time is precious, and, therefore, I shall be brief."

He approached the king, and, bowing deeply to him, added: "Your majesty knows that I have devoted my life to the service of Prussia. I have served her to the best of my ability and energy so long as the confidence of your majesty permitted me. But circumstances require me now to prove my devotedness in a different way. I can serve her now only by retiring from the civil service, and by laying the portfolio that your majesty intrusted to me, at your feet. I, therefore, request you to be so gracious as to accept my resignation."

The king made no immediate reply. The queen looked at him, and an expression of anxious suspense and tender solicitude was to be seen in her features. The Emperor Alexander stood with folded arms at the side of the king, and glanced with a smile now at the minister, now at the royal couple.

"Sire," repeated Hardenberg, since the king was still silent, "I request your majesty to be so gracious as to accept my resignation."

Frederick William started. "You know very well," he said, hastily, and almost in a harsh voice, "that it gives me pain to do so. I have to submit to necessity. I have no power to resist the most arrogant demands—no army to continue the war. Hence, I must accept the only terms on which I am able to obtain peace, and must also accept the resignation you tender. You are free, Minister von Hardenberg; I am not allowed to attach you to my cause. Accept my thanks for your valuable services, and, believe me, I regret that I shall have to do without them." He took the minister's hand and added: "I wish you joy of being no longer in office; it will not now be necessary for you to sign the peace which Napoleon offers to us."

"Sire," said Hardenberg, proudly, "I should never have signed that treaty. It is not a treaty of peace, but of servitude. But I forget that I have now no right to meddle with the policy of Prussia. I thank your majesty, and beg leave to depart."

"I have to permit you," said the king; "you are more fortunate than I am; you are a free man."

"Sire, I have, after all, but that freedom which every honorable man ought to preserve even in misfortune," said Hardenberg, gently—"the freedom of not bowing to wrong and injustice, and of perishing rather than enduring disgrace. I intend to depart in the course of an hour."

"Farewell," said Frederick William, hastily; "and when I say farewell, I mean that we shall meet again. I hope there will be better times. If I call you, then, will you come, Hardenberg?"

"I shall never close my ear against the call of your majesty and of Prussia," said Hardenberg, bowing to the king and the queen. He then turned to the Emperor Alexander. "Sire," he said,

"on taking leave of you, and being, perhaps, for the last time, so fortunate as to see your majesty, it is a comfort to me to remember the day when I beheld you first in the spring of the present year. It was at Kydullen, where your majesty showed to the King of Prussia your lifeguards that accompanied you from St. Petersburg to participate in the war against France. When the soldiers marched past you embraced King Frederick William, and exclaimed with tearful eyes: 'Neither of us shall fall alone; either both, or neither!' These words are still resounding in my ears, and in these disastrous days, when Prussia's honor and existence are at stake, they are my only consolation. Your majesty has not fallen, and hence, you will not allow Prussia to fall. You will remember your oath, the fidelity which Prussia has manifested toward you, and never so stain your glory as to desert her now and suffer her to fall alone! This is my hope, and, comforted by it, I leave you."

"Ah," said Alexander, sighing, "how unfortunate I am! You spoke at my right ear, and you know that there I am deaf. Hence, I did not hear much of what you said. But I believe you wished to take leave of me; I, therefore, bid you a heart-felt farewell, and wish you a happy journey." He offered his hand to Hardenberg, but the deep bow the minister made just then, prevented him, perhaps, from seeing the extended hand of the emperor; he did not grasp it, but withdrew in silence, walking backward to the door.

When he was about to go out, the queen rose from the sofa. "Hardenberg," she exclaimed, vehemently, "and you forget to bid *me* farewell?"

"Your majesty," said the minister, respectfully, "I await your permission to do so."

The queen hastened to him. Tears glistened in her eyes, and she said in a voice tremulous with emotion: "You know what I suffer in these times of humiliation, for you know my sentiments, which can never change—never prove faithless to the objects which we pursued together. A time of adversity compels us to bow our heads; but let us lift our hearts to God, and pray for better times. He will instill courage and patience into the souls of noble and true patriots, and teach them not to despair. Hardenberg, I believe in you, and so does Prussia. Work for the cause in private life, as you are unable to do so in public—prepare for the new era. This is my farewell—this the expression of my gratitude for your fidelity. May God protect you, that you may be able again to be useful to our country! Whenever I pray for Prussia, I shall remember you! Farewell!" She offered him her hand, and as he bent to kiss it, he could not refrain from tears. He averted his head as if to conceal his emotion, and left the room.

Louisa looked at the king, who stood musing with folded arms. "Oh, my husband!" she exclaimed mournfully, "Napoleon robs you not only of your states, but of your most faithful friends and advisers. God save Prussia!"

CHAPTER XXX.

QUEEN LOUISA AND NAPOLEON.

THE queen had finished her toilet. For the first time during many months, she had adorned herself, and appeared again in regal pomp. A white satin dress, embroidered with gold, surrounded her tall and beautiful form, and fell behind her in a flowing train. A broad necklace of pearls and diamonds set off her superb neck; bracelets of the same kind encircled her arms, that might have served as a model for Phidias. A diadem of costly gems was glittering on her expansive forehead. It was a truly royal toilet, and in former days the queen herself would have rejoiced in it; but to-day no gladness was in her face—her cheeks were pallid, her lips quivering, and her eyes gloomy.

She contemplated her figure in the mirror with a mournful, listless air, and, turning to Madame von Berg, who had accompanied her to Puktupöhnen, and who was to be her companion on her trip to Tilsit, she said: "Caroline, when I look at myself, I cannot help shuddering, and my heart feels cold. I am adorned as the ancient Germans used to dress their victims, when they were about to throw them into the flames to pacify the wrath of their gods. I shall suffer the same fate. I shall die of the fire burning in my heart, yet I shall not be able to propitiate the idol that the world is worshipping. It will be all in vain! With a soul so crushed as mine, I am incapable of accomplishing any thing. But complaints are useless, I must finish what I have begun; I must—but hush! is not that the sound of wheels approaching this house?"

"Yes," said Madame von Berg, hastening to the window; "it is a carriage—a brilliant court-carriage, drawn by eight horses, and escorted by French dragoons."

Louisa pressed her hands against her heart, and a low cry burst from her lips. "Oh," she whispered, "the dagger is again piercing my heart. Oh, how it aches!"

Owing to the noise with which the imperial coach had driven up, Madame von Berg did not hear the last words of the queen. "Oh," she exclaimed joyfully, "the Emperor Napoleon really seems to be favorably disposed toward us. He takes pains at least to receive your majesty with the respect due to a queen. The carriage is magnificent, and the eight horses wear a harness of gold and purple. The French dragoons have on their gala-uniforms and are marching into line to present arms when your majesty appears. I begin to hope that I was mistaken in Napoleon; he will not humble her whom he receives with the splendor lavished on the most powerful crowned heads."

Louisa shook her head. "He has learned a lesson from the ancient Cæsars," she said. "When Zenobia adorned the triumphal procession of Aurelian, she was clad in robes of purple and gold; she stood on a gilded car, surrounded by servants, as it was due to a queen. But manacles were about her arms; she was, after all, but a prisoner, and the contrast of the chain with the royal pomp rendered only more striking the imperial triumph and her own humiliation. But, no matter! We must go through with it. Come, Caroline, give me my cloak." She wrapped herself in a small cloak of violet velvet, and casting a last imploring glance toward heaven, she left the room to drive to Tilsit.

At the hotel, where the king was staying, he received his consort and conducted her up-stairs to the room prepared for her. They said little; the immense importance of this hour made them taciturn; they spoke to each other only by glances, by pressing each other's hands, and by a few whispered words indicative of their profound anxiety and suspense. Scarcely fifteen minutes had elapsed when one of Napoleon's aides appeared, to inform her that the emperor was already on his way to see her. The king kissed his wife's hand. "Farewell, Louisa," he said, "and may God give you strength to meet your adversary!"

Louisa retained him. "You will not stay with me?" she asked, breathlessly. "You will leave me at this painful moment?"

"Etiquette requires me to do so," said the king. "You know very well that I care nothing for these empty forms; but it seems that Napoleon, to whom they are still new, deems them necessary for upholding the majesty of the new-fangled empire. The emperor pays a visit to the queen alone; hence, you must receive him alone. Only your lady of honor is allowed to remain in the adjoining room, the door of which will be left open. Napoleon's companion—Talleyrand, I believe—will also remain there. Farewell, Louisa; I shall come only when the emperor expressly asks for me. Do you hear the horses in front of the house? Napoleon is coming! I go." He nodded pleasantly, and left the room.

"Oh, my children!" muttered the queen; "I am doing this for you—for your sake I will speak and humble my heart!"

She heard the sound of footsteps on the staircase, and Madame von Berg appeared in the adjoining room to announce that his majesty the Emperor Napoleon was approaching. Louisa nodded, and, quickly crossing the anteroom, she went out into the corridor. Napoleon was just ascending the stairs. His face was illuminated with a triumphant expression, and a sinister fire was burning in his eyes, which he fixed on the queen with a strange mixture of curiosity and sympathy. Louisa looked at him calmly; a touching smile played on her lips; her beautiful face beamed with energy and courage, and an air of pious solemnity was visible in her whole appearance. Napoleon felt involuntarily moved in the presence of a lady so queen-like and yet so gentle, and bowed more respectfully to her than he had ever done to any other woman.

"Sire," said Louisa, conducting him into the room, "I am sorry that your majesty had to ascend so miserable a staircase."

"Oh," exclaimed Napoleon, "if the way leading to you was inconvenient, madame, the reward is so desirable that one would shrink from no trouble to obtain it."

"It seems there is nothing too inconvenient for your majesty," said the queen, gently. "Neither the sands of Egypt nor the snows of our north impede the career of the hero. And yet I should think our cold climate an obstacle difficult to overcome. Did your majesty not have this opinion sometimes last winter?"

"It is true," said Napoleon. "Your Prussia is somewhat cold. She is too close to Russia, and allows herself to be fanned too much by its icy breezes!"

Louisa feigned not to understand this allusion to the policy of Prussia, and, turning to the emperor, she requested him to take a seat on the sofa. Napoleon offered her his hand and conducted her to it. "Let us sit down," he said, with a tinge of irony. Turning to her, he added: "You have hated me so long that you ought to give me now a slight token of the change in your sentiments, and permit me to sit at your side. Bending over, he looked her full in the face and seemed to wait for her to renew the conversation.

The queen felt her heart tremble—that the

critical moment had come, and she concentrated her courage and determination that that moment might not pass unimproved. She raised her eyes slowly, and, with an affecting expression, she said in a low, tremulous voice, "Will your majesty permit me to tell you why I have come hither?" Napoleon nodded, and continued looking steadily at her.

"I have come," added the queen, "to beg your majesty to grant Prussia a more favorable peace. Sire, I use the word 'beg!' I will not speak of our rights, of our claims, but only of our misfortunes; I will only appeal to the generosity of your majesty, imploring you to lessen our calamities, and have mercy on our people!"

"The misfortunes we suffer are generally the consequences of our own faults," exclaimed Napoleon, harshly; "hence, we must endure what we bring upon ourselves. How could you dare to wage war against me?"

The queen raised her head, and her eyes flashed. "Sire," she said, quickly and proudly, "the glory of the great Frederick induced us to mistake our strength, if we were mistaken."

"You were mistaken, at least in your hopes that you could vanquish me," exclaimed Napoleon, sternly. But, as if struck by a sudden recollection, and meaning to apologize for his rudeness, he bowed, and added in a pleasant tone: "I refer to Prussia and not to you, queen. Your majesty is sure to vanquish every one. I was told that you were beautiful, and I find that you are the most charming lady in the world!"

"I am neither so vain as to believe that, nor so ambitious as to wish it," said the queen. "I have come hither as consort of the king, as mother of my children, and as representative of my people!"

"Ah," exclaimed Napoleon, politely, "Prussia may well be proud of so noble a representative."

"Sire, Prussia cannot be proud," replied the queen, sighing. "She weeps over her sons fallen on the fields of battle that brought laurels to you; to us nothing but defeat. She has lost her prosperity; her fields are devastated; her supplies consumed. She is looking despondingly toward the future, and all that remains to her is hope. Sire, let not this hope be in vain! Pardon us for not having feared your all-powerful genius and your victorious heroism! It was a terrible misfortune for us to have mistaken our strength; but we have been humbled for it. Let it be enough! You have made us feel the conqueror's hand; let us now feel and acknowledge your magnanimity! Your majesty cannot intend to trample in the dust those whom fortune has already so humbled. You will not take revenge for our errors—you will not deride and revile our majesty—for majesty, sire, is still enthroned on our heads. It is the sacred inheritance which we must bequeath to our children."

"Ah, your majesty will comprehend that I cannot feel much respect for such sacred inheritance," said Napoleon, sneeringly.

"But your majesty will respect our misfortunes," exclaimed Louisa. "Sire, adversity is a majesty, too, and consecrates its innocent children."

"Prussia has to blame none but herself for her calamities!" said Napoleon, vehemently.

"Does your majesty say so because we defended our country when we were attacked?" asked the queen, proudly. "Do you say so because, faithful to the treaties which we had sworn to observe, we refused to desert our ally for the sake of our own profit, but courageously drew the sword to protect his and our frontiers? Heaven decreed that we should not be victorious in this struggle, and our defeats became a new laurel-wreath for your brow. But now you will deem your triumphs sufficient, and will not think of taking advantage of our distress. I am told that your majesty has asked of the king, as the price of peace, the largest and best part of his states—that you intend taking from him his fortresses, cities, and provinces, leaving to him a crown without territory, a title without meaning—that you wish to distribute his subjects and provinces, and form of them new nations. But your majesty knows well that we cannot with impunity rob a people of their inalienable and noblest rights—of their nationality—give them arbitrary frontiers, and transform them into new states. Nationality is a sentiment inherent in the human heart, and our Prussians have proud hearts. They love their king, their country—"

"And above all their august queen," interrupted Napoleon, who wished to put an end to this appeal, and direct the conversation into less impetuous channels. "Oh, I know that all Prussia idolizes her beautiful queen, and henceforth I shall not wonder at it. Happy those who are permitted to bear your chains!"

She cast on him a glance so contemptuous that Napoleon shrank, and lowered his eyes. "Sire," she said, "no one who bears chains is happy, and your majesty—who once said to the Italians, 'You need not fear me, for I have come to break your chains and to deliver you from degrading servitude!'—will not now reduce a state to servitude. For to wrest it from its legitimate sovereign, and to compel it to submit to another prince is chaining it—to distribute a people like merchandise, is re-

ducing them to slavery. Sire, I dare beg your majesty to leave us our nationality and our honor! I dare beg you in the name of my children to leave them their inheritance and their rights."

"Their rights?" asked Napoleon. "Only he has them who knows how to maintain them. What do you call the rights of your children?"

"Sire, I refer to their birth, their name, and history. By their birth, God conferred on them the right to rule over Prussia. And the Prussian monarchy is rooted in the hearts of the people. Oh, your majesty, do not overthrow it! Honor in us the crown adorning your own victorious head! Sovereigns ought to respect each other, that their people may never lose the respect due to them; sovereigns ought to support and strengthen each other, to enable them to meet their enemies now carried away by the insane ideas of a so-called new era—ideas that brought the heads of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette to the scaffold. Sire, princes are not always safe, and harmony among them is indispensable; but it is not strengthening one's own power to weaken that of others—it is not adding lustre to one's own crown to tarnish another's. O sire, in the name of all monarchies—nay, in the name of your own, now shedding so radiant a light over the whole world, I pray for our crown, our people, and our frontiers!"

"The Prussians," said Napoleon, rising, "could not have found a more beautiful and eloquent advocate than your majesty!" He paced the room several times, his hands folded behind him. The queen had also risen, but she stood still, and looked in breathless suspense at Napoleon, whose cold face seemed to warm a little with humane emotion. He approached, and fixed his eyes in admiration on her sad but noble countenance. "Your majesty," he said, "I believe you have told me many things which no one hitherto has ventured to tell me—many things which might have provoked my anger—some bitter words, and prophetic threats have fallen from your lips. This proves that you at least respect my character, and that you believe I will not abuse the position to which the fortune of war has elevated me. I will not disappoint you, madame. I will do all I can to mitigate your misfortunes, and to let Prussia remain as powerful as is compatible with my policy and with my obligations to my old and new friends. I regret that she refused to enter into an alliance with me, and that I vainly offered my friendship to her more than once. It is no fault of mine that your majesty has to bear the consequences of this refusal, but I will try to ameliorate them as much as I can. I cannot restore your old frontiers; I cannot deliver your country entirely from the burdens and calamities of war, and preserve it from the tribute which the conqueror must impose upon the vanquished, in order to receive some compensation for the blood that was shed. I will always remember that the Queen of Prussia is not only the most fascinating, but also the most high-minded, courageous, and generous lady in the world, and that one cannot do homage enough to her magnanimity and intelligence. I promise your majesty that I am quite willing to comply with all your wishes as far as I can. Inform me, therefore, of them; it will be best for you to be quite frank with me. We shall try to become good friends, and, as a token of this friendship, I take the liberty to offer you this flower, which bears so striking a resemblance to you." He took a full-blown moss-rose from the porcelain vase standing on the table, and presented it to her. "Will you accept this pledge of friendship at my hands?"

The queen hesitated. It was repugnant to her noble and proud heart to receive so sentimental a gift from him to whom her heart never could grant true friendship. She slowly raised her eyes and looked almost timidly into his smiling face. "Sire," she said in a low voice, "add to this pledge of your friendship still another, that I may accept the rose."

The smile faded from Napoleon's face, and anger darkened his forehead. "Remember, madame," he said harshly, "that it is I who command, and that you have but the choice to decline or to accept. Will you accept this rose?"

"Sire," said the queen, with quivering lips and tearful eyes, "give it to me with another pledge of your friendship. Give me Magdeburg for my children."

Napoleon threw the rose on the table. "Ah, madame," he said, vehemently, "Magdeburg is no toy for children!" He turned around and paced the room repeatedly, while Louisa hung her head, and looked resigned as a martyr ready to suffer death. Napoleon glanced at her as he passed, and the spectacle exhibited by this aggrieved, and yet so dignified and gentle a queen, touched him, for it reminded him of Josephine. He stood still in front of her. "Forgive my impulsiveness," he said; "I cannot give you Magdeburg, but you may rest assured that I will do all I can to lessen your calamities, and to fulfil your request. The Emperor Alexander is aware of my wishes; he knows that I am desirous to serve the King of Prussia. I should like to repeat this to your husband himself if he were here."

"He is here," said the queen, hastily; "and

with your majesty's permission he will be with us immediately.

Napoleon bowed in silence. A sign made by Louisa brought the lady of honor. "Be so kind as to request the king to come to us," said the queen, quickly.

"And while we are awaiting the king," said Napoleon, calling Talleyrand from the anteroom, "your majesty will permit me to introduce my companion. Madame, I have the honor to present my minister of foreign affairs, M. de Talleyrand, Prince de Benevento."

"And I deem myself happy to make the acquaintance of the greatest statesman of the age," said the queen, while Talleyrand's short figure bowed deeply. "Oh, your majesty is indeed to be envied. You have not only gained great glory, but are also blessed with high-minded and sagacious advisers and executors of your will. If the king my husband had always been equally fortunate, a great many things would not have happened."

"Well, we have induced him to displace at least one bad adviser," exclaimed Napoleon. "That man Hardenberg was the evil genius of the king; he is chiefly to blame for the misfortunes that have befallen Prussia, and it was necessary to remove him."

"But he was an experienced statesman," said the queen, whose magnanimous character found it difficult to listen to any charge against Hardenburg without saying something in his defence; "he is a very skilful politician, and it will not be easy for the king to fill the place of Minister von Hardenburg."

"Ah!" said Napoleon, carelessly; "ministers are always to be found. Let him appoint Baron von Stein; he seems to be a man of understanding."

An expression of joyful surprise overspread the queen's face. The king entered. Napoleon met him and offered him his hand. "I wished to give your majesty a proof of my kind disposition in the presence of your noble and beautiful consort, and, if you have no objection, to assure you of my friendship," he said. "I have complied as far as possible with all your wishes. The Emperor Alexander, in whom you have an ardent and eloquent friend, will confirm it to you. I also communicated to him my last propositions, and trust that your majesty will acquiesce in them."

"Sire," said the king, coldly, "the Emperor Alexander laid this ultimatum before me, but it would be very painful to me if I should be obliged to accept it. It would deprive me of the old hereditary provinces which form the largest portion of my states."

"I will point out a way to get compensation for these losses," exclaimed Napoleon. "Apply to the Emperor Alexander; let him sacrifice to you his relatives, the Princes of Mecklenburg and Oldenburg. He can also give up to you the King of Sweden, from whom you may take Stralsund and that portion of Pomerania of which he makes such bad use. Let him consent that you should have these acquisitions, not indeed equal to the territories taken from you, but better situated, and, for my part, I shall make no objection."

"Your majesty proposes to me a system of spoliation, to which I can never agree," said the king, proudly. "I complain of the menaced loss of my provinces, not only because it would lessen the extent of my territories, but because they are the hereditary states of my house, and are associated with my ancestors by indissoluble ties of love and fealty."

"You see that these ties are not indissoluble after all," exclaimed Napoleon, "for we shall break them, and you will be consoled for th loss by obtaining compensation."

"Possibly others may be more readily consoled for such losses," said the king: "those who are only anxious for the possession of states, and who do not know what it is to part with hereditary provinces in which the most precious reminiscences of our youth have their root, and which we can no more forget than our cradle."

"Cradle!" exclaimed Napoleon, laughing scornfully. "When the child has become a man, he has no time to think of his cradle."

"Yes, he has," said the king, with an angry expression. "We cannot repudiate our childhood, and a man who has a heart must remember the associations of his youth."

Napoleon, making no reply, looked grave, while Frederick William fixed his eyes on him with a sullen and defiant expression. The queen felt that it was time for her to prevent a more violent outburst of indignation on the part of her husband. "The real cradle is the tender heart of a mother," she said gently, "and all Europe knows that your majesty does not forget it; all are aware of the reverential love of the great conqueror for Madame Letitia, whom France hails as noble *Madame Mère*."

Napoleon raised his eyes toward her, and his forbidding expression disappeared. "It is true," he said, "your sons, madame, ought to be envied such a mother. They will owe you many thanks, for it is you, madame, who have saved Prussia by

your eloquence and noble bearing. I repeat to you once more that I shall do what I can to fulfil your wishes. We shall confer further about it. At present, I have the honor to take leave of your majesty."

He offered his hand to the queen. "Sire," she said, profoundly affected, "I hope that, after making the acquaintance of the hero of the century, you will permit me to remember in you the generous conqueror as well as the man of genius." Napoleon silently kissed her hand, and, bowing to the king, left the room.

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, when she was alone with her husband, "perhaps it was not in vain that I came hither; God may have imparted strength to my words, and they may have moved the heart of this all-powerful man, so that he will acknowledge our just demands, and shrink from becoming the robber of our property."

In the mean time Napoleon returned to his quarters, accompanied by Talleyrand. But when the minister, on their arrival at the palace, was about to withdraw, the emperor detained him. "Follow me into my cabinet," he said, advancing quickly. Talleyrand limped after him, and a smile, half scornful, half malicious, played on his thin lips.

"The hero who wants to rule over the world," said Talleyrand to himself, "is now seized with a very human passion, and I am sure we shall have a highly sentimental scene." He entered the room softly, and lurkingly watched every movement of Napoleon. The emperor threw his small hat on one chair, his gloves and sword on another, and then paced the room repeatedly. Suddenly he stood still in front of Talleyrand and looked him full in the face.

"Were you able to overhear my conversation with the queen?" he asked.

"I was, sire!" said Talleyrand, laconically, "I was able to overhear every word."

"You know, then, for what purpose she came hither," exclaimed Napoleon, and commenced again pacing the apartment.

"Talleyrand," he said, after a pause, "I have wronged this lady. She is an angel of goodness and purity, she is a true woman and a true queen. It was a crime for me to persecute her. Yes, I confess that I was wrong in offending her. On merely hearing the sound of her voice I felt vanquished, and was as confused and embarrassed as the most timid of men. My hand trembled when I offered her the rose. I have slandered her, but I will make compensation!" He resumed his walk rapidly; a delicate blush mantled his cheeks, and all his features indicated profound emotion. Talleyrand, looking as cold and calm as usual, still stood at the door, and seemed to watch the emperor with the scrutinizing eye of a physician observing the crisis of a disease.

"Yes," added Napoleon, "I ought certainly to compensate her for what I have done. She shall weep no more on my account; she shall no more hate and detest me as a heartless conqueror. I will show her that I can be magnanimous, and compel her to admit that she was mistaken in me. I will raise Prussia from the dust. I will render her more powerful than ever, and enlarge her frontiers instead of narrowing them. And then, when her enchanting eyes are filled with gladness, I will offer my hand to her husband and say to him: 'You were wrong; you were insincere toward me, and I punished you for it. Now let us forget your defeats and my victories; instead of weakening your power, I will increase it that you may become my ally, and remain so forever!' Talleyrand, destroy the conditions I dictated to you; send for Count Goltz; confer with him again, and grant his demands!"

"Sire," exclaimed Talleyrand, apparently in dismay, "sire, shall posterity say that you failed to profit by your most splendid conquest, owing to the impression a beautiful woman made upon you?" The emperor started, and Talleyrand added: "Sire, has the blood of your soldiers who fell at Jena, at Eylau, and at Friedland, been shed in vain, and is it to be washed away by the tears of a lady who now appears to be as inoffensive as a lamb, but who is to blame for this whole war? Your majesty ought not to forget that the Queen of Prussia instigated her husband to begin it—that, at the royal palace of Berlin, you took a solemn oath to punish her, and to take revenge for her warlike spirit, and for the oath over the tomb of Frederick the Great! Ah, the queen, with Frederick William and the Emperor Alexander, would exult at your tender-heartedness; the world would wonder at the weakness of the great captain who allowed himself to be duped by the sighs and seeming humility of the vanquished, and—"

"Enough!" interrupted Napoleon, in a powerful voice—"enough, I say!" He walked several times up and down, and then stood still again in front of Talleyrand. "Send immediately for Count Goltz," he said imperiously, "and inform him of our ultimatum! Tell him in plain words that all I said to the queen were but polite phrases, binding me in no manner, and that I am as firmly determined as ever to fix the Elbe as the future frontier of Prussia—that there was no question of further negotiations—that I had already agreed

with the Emperor Alexander as to the various stipulations, and that the king owed his lenient treatment solely to the chivalrous attachment of this monarch, inasmuch as, without his interference, my brother Jerome would have become King of Prussia, while the present dynasty would have been dethroned. You know my resolutions now; proceed in accordance with them, and hasten the conclusion of the whole affair, that I may be annoyed no more. I demand that the treaty be signed to-morrow."

Prussia's fate was therefore decided. The great sacrifice which the queen had made, and with so much reluctance, had been in vain. On the 9th of June, 1807, the treaty of Tilsit was signed by the representatives of France and Prussia. By virtue of it King Frederick William lost one-half of his territories, consisting of all his possessions beyond the Elbe: Old Prussia, Magdeburg, Hildesheim, Westphalia, Friesland, Erfurt, Eichsfeld, and Baireuth. The Polish provinces were taken from him, as well as a portion of West Prussia, the district of Kulm, including the city of Thorn, half of the district of the Netze, and Dantzic, which was transformed into a free city. Besides, the king acknowledged the Confederation of the Rhine, the Kings of Holland and Westphalia, Napoleon's brothers, and engaged to close his ports against England. And, as was expressly stated in the document, these terms were obtained only "*in consideration of the Emperor of Russia*, and owing to Napoleon's sincere desire to attach both nations to each other by indissoluble bonds of confidence and friendship."

Russia, which had signed the treaty on the preceding day, gained a large portion of Eastern Prussia, the frontier district of Bialystock, and thus enriched herself with the spoils taken from her own ally.

Thus Frederick William concluded peace, losing his most important territories, and having his ten millions of subjects reduced to five millions. The genius of Prussia, Queen Louisa, veiled her head and wept!

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER XXXI.

BARON VON STEIN.

PROFOUND sadness reigned for several weeks at the house of Baron Charles von Stein. Tears were in the eyes of his children, and whenever their mother came from her husband's room and joined them for a moment, they seemed in her only to seek comfort and hope. But the anxious face of the baroness became more sorrowful, and the family physician, who visited the house several times a day, was more taciturn and grave. Baron von Stein was ill, and his disease was one of those which baffle the skill of the physician, because their seat is to be sought less in the body than in the mind. Prussia's misfortunes had prostrated Stein. Sick at heart, and utterly broken down, at the commencement of 1807, after the violent scene with King Frederick William, he left Königsberg, and travelled slowly toward Nassau. There he met his family, and ever since lived in retirement. Never in his grief had he uttered a complaint, or manifested any loss of temper, but his face had become paler, his gait slower, and indicative of increasing weakness and exhaustion. He yielded at last to the tears of his wife, and the repeated remonstrances of his physician, to submit to medical treatment.

But medicine did not restore him; his strength decreased, and the fever wrecking his body grew more violent. The disease had recently, however, assumed a definite character; the news of the disaster of Friedland, and of the humiliating treaty of Tilsit, had violently shaken his constitution, and the physician was now able to discern the true character of the malady and give it a name. It was the tertian fever which alternately reddened and paled the baron's cheeks, at times paralyzing his clear, powerful mind, or moving his lips to utter unmeaning words, the signs of his delirium.

Baron von Stein had just undergone another attack of his dangerous disease. All night long his devoted wife had watched at his bedside, and listened despondingly to his groans, his fantastic expressions, his laughter and lamentations. In the morning, the sufferer had grown calmer; consciousness had returned, and his eyes sparkled again with intelligence. The fever had left him, but he was utterly prostrated. The physician had just paid him a visit, and examined his condition in silence. "Dear doctor," whispered the baroness, as he was departing, "you find my husband very ill, I suppose? Oh, I read it in your face; I perceive from your emotion that you have not much hope of his recovery!" And the tears she knew how to conceal in the sick-room fell without restraint.

"He is very ill," said the physician, thoughtfully, "but I do not believe his case to be entirely hopeless; for an unforeseen circumstance may come to our assistance and give his mind some energy, when it will favorably influence the body. If the body alone were suffering, science would suggest ways and means to cure a disease which, in itself, is easily overcome. The tertian fever belongs neither to the dangerous acute diseases nor to any graver class. But, in this case, it is only the external eruption of a disease seated in the patient's mind."

"Whence, then, is recovery to come in these calamitous and depressing times?" said the baroness, mournfully. "His grief at the misfortunes of Prussia is gnawing at his heart, and all the mortifications and misrepresentations he has suffered at the hands of the very men whom he served with so much fidelity have pierced his soul like poisoned daggers. Oh, I shall never pardon the king that he could so bitterly mortify and humble my noble husband, who is enthusiastically

devoted to Prussia—that he could mistake his character so grievously, and prefer such cruel charges against him. He called him—the best, the most intelligent and reliable of all his servants—a seditious man; he charged him with being self-willed, stubborn, and proud, and said he was mischievous and disobedient to the state. Oh, believe me, that accusation is what troubles Stein! The King of Prussia has humbled his pride so deeply and unjustly, that a reconciliation between them is out of the question. Stein lives, thinks, and grieves only for his country, and yet the insulting vehemence and unfeeling words of the king have rendered it impossible for him ever to reënter the Prussian service. He sees that his country is sinking every day, and that she is ruined not only by foreign enemies, but by domestic foes preying at the vitals of her administration. He would like to help her—he feels that he has stored up the means to do so in his experience—and yet he cannot. I ask you, therefore, my friend, where is the balm for his wounded soul?"

"I do not know," said the physician, "but we must get it. Germany has not now so many high-minded and courageous men that she could spare one, and the best of them all. The genius of Germany will assuredly find a remedy to save her noble champion, Baron von Stein."

"Ah, you believe still in the genius of Germany?" asked the baroness, mournfully. "You see all the horrors, the shame, the degradation that Germany, and especially Prussia, have to suffer! The calamities of our country, then, my friend, have transformed you into a believer, and made of the rationalist a mystic, believing in miracles? You know I was hitherto pious, and a faithful believer, but now I begin to doubt. Now I ask myself anxiously whether there really is a God in heaven, who directs and ordains every thing, and yet permits us to be thus trampled in the dust."

"Our duty is, perhaps, to strengthen ourselves by misfortunes," said the physician. "Germany was sleeping so profoundly that she could only be aroused by calamity, and become fully alive to her degrading position. But, believe me, she is opening her eyes, and seeking for those who can help her. She cannot forget Baron von Stein; but must feel that she stands in need of him."

"May you be a true prophet!" said the baroness, sighing, "and that your words—but hark!" she interrupted herself, "some one is violently ringing the door-bell! He must be a stranger, for none of the citizens would announce a visit in so noisy a manner. The inhabitants manifest sympathy for us; many come every morning to inquire about my husband. Without solicition our neighbors have spread a layer of straw in front of the house, and along the street, that no noise may disturb the beloved sufferer, and—"

Just then the door opened, and a footman stated that a stranger desired to see the baroness concerning a matter of great importance.

"Me?" she asked, wonderingly.

"He asked first for Baron von Stein," replied the footman, "and when I told him that my master was very ill, he seemed alarmed. But he bade me announce his visit to the baroness, and tell her that he had made a long journey, and was the bearer of important news."

"Admit him, baroness," said the physician; "he brings, perhaps, news that may be good for our patient. As for me, permit me to withdraw."

"No, my dear doctor, you must stay," she said. "You are an intimate friend of my husband and of my family, and this person cannot have any thing to say to me that you may not hear. Besides, your advice and assistance may be necessary; and if the news should be important for my husband, you ought not to be absent."

"Well, if you wish me to stay, I will," said the physician; "who knows whether my hopes may not be presently realized?"

"Admit the stranger," said the baroness; and he entered a few minutes afterward.

"High-Chamberlain von Schladen!" she exclaimed, meeting him.

"You recognize me, then, madame?" asked M. von Schladen. "The memories of past times have not altogether vanished in this house, and one may hope—" At this moment his eyes met the physician, and he paused.

"Doctor von Waldau," said the baroness, "a faithful friend of my husband, and at present his indefatigable physician. He is one of us, and you may speak freely in his presence, Mr. Chamberlain."

"Permit me, then, to apply to you directly, and to ask you whether Baron von Stein is so ill that I cannot see him about grave and important business?"

"The baron is very ill," said the physician, "but there is no immediate danger; and, as the fever has left him to-day, he will be able to converse about serious matters—that is to say, if they are not of a very sad and disheartening character."

"Grief for Prussia's misfortunes is my hus-

band's disease," said the baroness; "consider well, therefore, if what you intend telling him will aggravate it, or bring him relief. If a change for the better has taken place—if you bring him the news that that disgraceful treaty of Tilsit has been repudiated, and that the war will continue, it will be a salutary medicine, and, in spite of the warlike character of your news, you will appear as an angel of peace at his bedside. But if you come only to confirm the disastrous tidings that have prostrated him, it may cause his death."

"I do not bring any warlike tidings," said M. von Schladen, sadly; "I do not bring intelligence that the treaty of Tilsit has been repudiated! Hence, I cannot, as you say, appear as an angel of peace. Nevertheless, I do not come croaking of our disasters. I come in the name of, and commissioned by Prussia, to remind Baron von Stein of the words he uttered to the queen when he took leave of her. You, sir, being his physician, are alone able to decide whether I may see him, and lay my communication before him. For this reason I must tell you more explicitly why I have come. You permit me to do so, I suppose, baroness?"

"Oh, speak! my heart is yearning for your words!" exclaimed the baroness.

"I come to see Baron von Stein, not merely because I long to speak to the man for whom I entertain so much love and respect," said M. von Schladen, "but I come in the name of the king and queen. I bring him letters from Minister von Hardenberg, from the Princess Louisa von Radziwill, and from General Blücher, and verbal communications from the queen. I have travelled without taking a moment's rest in order to deliver my letters as soon as possible, and to inform the baron of the wishes of their majesties. And now that I have arrived at my destination, I find the man sick in bed who is the only hope of Prussia. You will, perhaps, even shut his door against me, and all the greetings of love, the solicitations and supplications which I bring, will not reach him! It would be a heavy misfortune for Prussia and for the deeply-afflicted king, who is looking hopefully toward Baron von Stein!"

"He is looking hopefully toward my husband," exclaimed the baroness, reproachfully, "and yet it was he who insulted the baron in so grievous a manner!"

"But the king repents of it, and desires to indemnify him for it," said M. von Schladen. "I come to request Baron von Stein to return to Prussia, and to become once more the king's minister and adviser."

"Oh," exclaimed the physician, joyfully, "you see now that I am a true prophet. The genius of Germany has found a remedy to cure our noble sufferer."

"You permit me, then, to speak to him?" asked Mr von Schladen.

"I request you to do so," replied the physician. "I demand that you go to him immediately, and speak to him freely and unreservedly. His mind is in need of a vigorous shock to become again conscious of its own strength; when it has regained this consciousness, the body will rise from its prostration."

"Doctor, I am somewhat afraid," said the baroness, anxiously. "He was of late so nervous and irritable, you know, that the most trifling occurrence caused him to tremble and covered his brow with perspiration. I am afraid these stirring communications may make too powerful an impression upon him."

"Never mind," exclaimed the physician; "let them make a powerful impression upon him—let them even cause him to faint—I do not fear the consequences in the least; on the contrary, I desire them, for the shock of his nervous system will be salutary, and bring about a crisis that will lead to his recovery."

"But, doctor, excuse me, you know he had a raging fever all night, and is exhausted. What good will it do to communicate the news to him? He cannot obey the king's call, and, at best, weeks must past before recovering sufficiently to attend to state matters."

"Ah, Baron von Stein accomplishes in days what others perform only in weeks," exclaimed the physician, smiling. "He is one of those men whose mind has complete control of his body. In his case, if you cure the one you cure the other."

"But I doubt whether my husband will accept these offers of the king," said the baroness, hesitatingly; "he has been insulted too grossly."

"But he is a patriot in the best sense of the word," said M. von Schladen; "he will forget personal insult when the welfare of the people is at stake."

"And even though he should not accept," said the physician, "he receives at least a gratifying satisfaction in the king's offer, and that will assuredly be a balm for his wounds. I shall now go to him once more. If he is entirely free from fever, I will let you come in, and you may tell him every thing."

"But you will not go away," said the baroness; "you will stay here, so as to be at hand in case any thing should happen."

"I shall remain in this room," said the physician, "and you may call me if necessary. Now

let me see first how our patient is, and whether I may announce M. von Schladen's visit. He hastened back into the sick-room without waiting for a reply; the baroness sank down on a chair, and, folding her trembling hands, prayed fervently. High-Chamberlain von Schladen looked at the door by which the physician had disappeared, and his face expressed suspense and impatience.

At length the door opened again, and the physician appeared on the threshold. "High-Chamberlain von Schladen," he said aloud, "come in; Baron von Stein awaits you."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE PATRIOT.

High-Chamberlain von Schladen entered the sick-room on tiptoe, preceded by the Baroness von Stein, who, hastening to her husband, looked at him anxiously. In fact, the baron looked very ill. His cheeks were hollow and deadly pale; his eyes lay deep in their sockets, and were flashing with that peculiar light emanating from the fever; his thin lips were parched, and he constantly tried to moisten them with his tongue, while his breathing was very painful.

M. von Schladen looked in profound emotion at the patient, and a feeling of melancholy was apparent. He was obliged to acknowledge that the baroness was right, and that this wasted form was not able to rise to obey the king's call; he believed that he had come in vain, and would be compelled to leave without having accomplished any thing, and this conviction was accompanied with a sigh. The sick man heard it, and a faint smile passed over his features. "You find me very ill then, M. von Schladen?" he asked in a tremulous voice. "I suppose I am but the shadow of the healthy, vigorous man who took leave of you at Königsberg a few months since? You see, I am still unable to give up my sympathies for Prussia; indeed, I am like her in every respect. Prussia is also but a shadow of what she was a short time ago; she is undergoing her death-struggle, and will succumb unless a strong arm soon lift her up."

"But this strong arm will come," said M. von Schladen.

"You believe so?" asked Stein. "Would you were right! But all I hear is disheartening. We live in a period of degradation and servitude, when we can do nothing better than seek a refuge in the grave, the only place where we may find liberty. You see that I am already on the brink. But I will not now speak of myself, but of you. What brought you hither? To what lucky accident am I indebted for your visit? My physician has told me you had casually stopped in this town, and being informed of my illness had desired to see me. What is your destination?"

"I am returning to Memel, to the King and Queen of Prussia," said M. von Schladen.

"Ah, you are a faithful servant, and I envy you," said Baron von Stein, "for your services are gratefully accepted; you are not treated with contumely, and your zeal is not regarded as malice and self-will. You may assist your country with your head, your arm, and your heart. You are not doomed to step aside, and idly dream away your days instead of seeking relief in useful activity. Oh, I repeat again, I envy you!" While he was speaking, his pale cheeks had assumed some color, and his voice, which, at first, had been faint, grew louder. But now, exhausted by the effort, and by his profound emotion, he sank back on the pillow and closed his eyes.

His wife bent over him, and wiped off the perspiration which covered his brow in large drops. In the open door leading into the adjoining room, appeared the kind face of the physician, who looked scrutinizingly at the patient. He then nodded in a satisfied manner, and whispered to the high-chamberlain: "Go on! go on! Tell him every thing. He can bear it."

Baron von Stein opened his eyes again and glanced at M. von Schladen. "You did not yet tell me whence you came, my dear friend?" he said. "Was your journey a mere pleasure-trip, or were graver purposes connected with it?"

"It was no pleasure-trip, for what German cares nowadays for such things?" said M. von Schladen. "My purpose, in undertaking this journey, was not only a grave, but a sacred one. I undertook it for the welfare of our country, and I come to solicit your advice. I know you loved Prussia once; you will not, although you are no longer in her service, withhold your sympathy from her; when you can be useful, you will joyfully render her aid, will you not?"

"Yes, indeed I will," exclaimed Baron von Stein; "my thoughts were with you all the time; my grief arises from your affliction and the misfortunes of Prussia; every new blow inflicted upon her fell on me, and her ruin prostrated me. Tell me, in what way can I aid you?"

"Your excellency, by assisting me in finding the man whom I am seeking; on whom the eyes of all good Prussians are fixed, and who is alone

able to save the country, to reëstablish its prosperity at home, and to obtain for it respect and authority abroad. The man whom the queen calls her friend, and of whom she expects help—to whom the king offers his hand, and whom he begs (understand me well, begs) to sustain him with his strong arm and his powerful mind, and, for the sake of Prussia, not to remember the wrongs he suffered in by-gone days—your excellency, I am seeking this high-minded man, who forgets insults, and yet does not close his ears against the cry of his country; whom adversity does not deter, and whom the burden to be laid on his shoulders does not cause to tremble; who forgets his own interests in order to have the satisfaction of saving a state to which, from his youth, he has devoted his strength—the man in whom all patriots confide, whom Hardenberg, when Napoleon's despotic will compelled him to resign his office, pointed out to the king as the only one by whom Prussia might still be redeemed. Your excellency, can you tell me where I may find this man?"

While M. von Schladen was speaking, Stein slowly raised his head to listen. His countenance had undergone a marvellous change; his features had regained their wonted expression, and his eyes beamed with energy.

"Your excellency," asked Schladen again, "can you tell me where I may find this man for whom all Prussia is calling?"

"You have not yet told me his name," whispered Baron von Stein. "To find him it is necessary to know his name."

"His name is on this letter which the Princess von Radziwill requested me to deliver to him," said Schladen, taking one from his memorandum-book, and handing it to the patient.

Baron von Stein quickly took it, and, on looking at the superscription, he muttered, "My name! my name is on the letter!"

"And it is your name that is now on all Prussian lips—that the queen is calling from afar—that the king—"

"Ah," interrupted Baron von Stein, "the king has insulted me too deeply; I should almost dishonor myself if I forget it!"

"You will shed the most radiant honor on your name by forgiving it," exclaimed M. de Schladen. "The king has commissioned me to tell you that he hopes in you alone. He will intrust to you the department of the interior and of finance; he assures you of his most implicit confidence; he promises never to allude again to what has passed between him and you. Here, your excellency, is a communication from Minister von Hardenberg, which will confirm all I have said."

He laid another letter on the table. Baron von Stein took it and looked at the address with a faint smile. "It is Hardenberg's handwriting," he said; "he is a genuine courtier, and takes it always for granted that the king's will is a sacred law for every one. He calls me already 'Prussian Minister of Finance.' And the queen?" he then asked, raising his eyes to M. von Schladen. "What does she say?" Does she believe, too, that I can forget, forgive, and return?"

"The queen believes it, because she wishes it, your excellency. 'Stein is my last consolation,' she said to me when I took leave of her. 'Being a man of magnanimity and the keenest sagacity, he may be able to discover ways and means of saving the country that are as yet concealed from us. Tell him that, when he comes, the sun will rise again for me; tell him to remember the sacred vow I received from him to stand faithfully by us, and to come when Prussia stands in need of him, and calls him to her assistance. Tell him that his queen prays Heaven to restore to her country the man who is a defence against wrong and injustice, and one of the noblest sons of Germany.'"

Baron von Stein cast down his eyes; his lips were trembling; and tears rolled slowly down his cheeks.

"Your excellency," said M. von Schladen, urgently, "will you not read the letters? That from the Princess Louisa von Radziwill will give you a more graphic description of the present situation of the court than I am able to do; the one from Minister von Hardenberg will tell you what to do, and how important and necessary it is that you should come as speedily as possible. In Hardenberg's letter you will also find a brief note from General Blücher, who joins in these solicitations. I have been permitted to read these letters, that, if they were lost on the way, I should, nevertheless, be able to communicate their contents to you. Will you not read them?"

"Yes," said Baron von Stein, breathing more freely, "I will read them. They are the first doves that, after the long deluge of affliction, come to me with an olive-branch of peace. I will see what the letters contain." He hastily opened that from the Princess Louisa and commenced reading it. But the paper soon dropped from his hand; a death-like pallor overspread his cheeks, and, almost fainting, he fell back on the pillow. "Alas," he murmured mournfully, "I forget that I am a poor, sick man! I cannot read; the letters swim before my eyes!" But this faintness lasted only a moment; Stein then raised his

head again, and turned his eyes with a tender expression toward his wife, who was sitting at his bedside, and watching all his movements with anxious suspense. "Dear Wilhelmina," he said, "you have been my secretary during the last few weeks, and have rendered evil tidings less disagreeable to me; will you not read these cheering letters to me?"

The baroness bent over him, and, in place of a reply, kissed his forehead. She then read as follows:

"Your friend Hardenberg and the newspapers will have informed you of the melancholy end of all our hopes. Cowardice and weakness, perhaps more than the luck of our enemies, have subjugated us, and Hardenberg's resignation, which he tendered voluntarily, in order to be useful to us even by this sacrifice, and to preserve the king from the humiliation of dismissing him, causes us to feel our yoke painfully. I promised to write to you about the king. He deserves our sympathy at this moment; his courage and firmness have not been shaken by our last disasters; he was ready to make any sacrifice, because he thought it better to fall nobly than to live dishonorably. He clung with sincere attachment to your friend Hardenberg, and just at this moment when all are deserting him, when he has neither power nor will, he loses this well-tried friend, who, actuated by his love of the country, and affection for his master, left him with a grief that deeply moved my heart. At this moment the eyes of us all are turning toward you, my dear Stein. From you we hope for consolation, and for forgetfulness of the wrongs which have removed you from us, and which you will be too generous to remember at a time when he who insulted you only deserves your sympathy and assistance. Can you withstand our solicitations? Can you see this country deserted, and refuse to it the coöperation of those talents that alone are able to raise us from our prostration? Hardenberg sees no other hope for his master than in you, and if you are not restored to us—if you do not yield to the wishes of those yearning for you, what is to become of our future?

"I admit that to call upon you to share our fortune is to deem you capable of the greatest disinterestedness; for nothing has ever been done by you to deserve the conduct formerly manifested toward you; but your soul is too generous to remember those insults, and I know you too well not to be sure that you will unhesitatingly come to the assistance of this unfortunate prince, who for five months possesses just claims to sympathy. Even at this juncture he maintains his dignity; he has gained friends and zealous adherents, and appears to me never more estimable than since these disasters, in which I have seen him assert a courage and resignation of which I should never have deemed him capable. It grieved me to see Hardenberg depart; he himself is very sad, and I am sure that only the hope of restoring you to the service of his master sustains him. Do not refuse to comply with our request, my dear Stein, and be not as cruel as that destiny which is taking from us all the distinguished characters that were able to reconcile us with life and mankind. I look for your reply with impatience; may it be favorable to us! It needs no assurance of mine to make you believe in the affectionate and constant attachment which I have always felt for you. "Louisa."

Stein listened to the letter with eyes half closed. A faint blush had gradually suffused his cheeks, and a smile was playing on his lips. "And what do you think of this letter, Wilhelmina?" he then asked. "What does your heart reply to this call?"

"I am fearful for you, my beloved friend," said the baroness, mournfully. "My heart shrinks from this career into which you will reënter, and in which you will be exposed again to ingratitude, and the persecutions of your enemies."

"Not to ingratitude," said M. von Schladen. "All Prussia will be grateful to you, and the king will be the first to thank and reward you with his friendship for having complied with his invitation. Your excellency, will you not read the letter from Minister von Hardenberg? It will tell you in the most convincing manner how firmly you may rely on the king and on his gratitude, and how necessary it is that you should repair to him as soon as possible."

"No, no, I will not hear any more," exclaimed Stein, in a loud voice. "It shall not be said that the flattering words of a friend induced me to do what is my duty. Call the doctor; I must see the doctor!"

"The doctor is here," said Dr. von Waldau, entering the room. "When patients are able to shout in such stentorian tones, they must indeed stand in need of assistance."

"Doctor," exclaimed Stein, "come here; feel my pulse, look me full in the face, and tell me, upon your honor, when I shall be able to set out."

The physician took the proffered hand and laid his finger on the pulse. A pause ensued; all looked in breathless suspense on his face. The doctor smilingly nodded. "It has turned out as I predicted," he exclaimed. "The 'genius of Germany' has come to our assistance, and saved

her bravest and noblest champion. The pulse is regular and strong, as it has not been for weeks. The crisis for which I hoped so long has taken place. Baron von Stein, in two weeks you will be well enough to set out."

"In two weeks!" exclaimed the baron, in a contemptuous tone of voice. "You did not hear, then, that Prussia stands in need of me; that the kings calls me, and that Hardenberg tells me it is of the highest importance I should immediately enter upon the duties of my office? No, I shall not depart in two weeks, nor in two days, but immediately!" He raised himself in his bed, and imperiously stretching out his arms, he exclaimed, "My clothes! I will rise! I have no more time to be sick! Give me my clothes!"

"But my beloved friend," exclaimed the baroness, in dismay, "this is impossible; just consider that the fever has exhausted your strength, that—"

"Hush, do not contradict him," whispered the physician. "The contradiction would irritate him, and might easily bring about a fresh attack of fever."

"My clothes! my clothes!" exclaimed Baron von Stein, louder and more imperiously than before, and he cast angry glances on his wife.

The physician himself hastened to the clothes-press, and, taking the silken dressing-gown from it, carried it to the patient. "Here is your dressing-gown," he said; "let me be your *valet de chambre*." Baron von Stein thanked him with a smile, and lifted up his arms that the garmeut might be wrapped around him.

"And here are your slippers," said the baroness; "let me put them on your feet."

"And permit me to support you when you rise," said M. von Schladen, approaching the bed. "Oh, lean on me only for a moment; afterward the whole of Prussia will lean on you."

Baron von Stein made no reply. He put on the dressing-gown and the slippers, and then raised himself, assisted by M. von Schladen. But his face was pallid, and large drops of perspiration gathered on his forehead. He left his couch, and stood free and erect. "I am well again!" he exclaimed. "Prussia calls me! I am not allowed to be ill; I—" His voice died away in a faint groan; his head bent down, and his form sank to the floor. M. von Schladen and the baroness caught him in their arms, and placed him again on his bed.

"Doctor," exclaimed the baroness, in a menacing tone, "if he die, you are his murderer; you have killed him!"

"No," said the physician, quietly, "I have saved him. This swoon is the last struggle of death with triumphant life. When Baron von Stein awakes he will be no longer seriously ill, but convalescent. When he is conscious again, the crisis is over. See, he begins to stir! Ah, his brave mind will not suffer his body to rest, and will assuredly awaken it."

The baron very soon opened his eyes, and looked with a perfectly calm and conscious expression, first at his wife, then at the physician and the king's messenger. "M. von Schladen," he said, will you read to me Hardenberg's letter? Wilhelmina, lay your arm around me and support my head a little. Waldau is right; I will not be able to set out to-day. I am still very weak."

"But you will be able to set out in ten days," exclaimed the physician. "You see I yield to you. I ask no longer for two weeks, but only for ten days."

Baron von Stein gave him his hand with a grateful glance. "And now, High-Chamberlain von Schladen, I request you to read once more Hardenberg's communication." M. von Schladen looked inquiringly at the physician, who nodded his consent.

"Read, read," said the baron, entreatingly, supporting his head against his wife's shoulder. M. von Schladen opened the letter, and laid General Blücher's note, enclosed in it, on the table and commenced reading.

The letter urgently requested Baron von Stein to accept the two departments of finance and of the interior, which the king wished to intrust to him because the welfare of Prussia required it. Besides, Hardenberg asked Stein to repair immediately to the king, because it was of the highest importance that the ears of Frederick William should not be besieged again by hostile insinuations. He gave him cautious hints as to the manner in which he would have to win the confidence of Frederick William, and assured him that he would retain it, provided he never pretended to rule over the king. He called upon him in the name of Prussia and Germany not to decline the difficult task, but to fulfil the hopes which patriots were reposing in him. He advised him to impose such conditions as he might deem prudent before accepting the offer, and to address a letter to his majesty in regard to them.

A pause ensued. Stein had listened to the words of his friends in silence. All looked at him anxiously. His face was calm, and when he slowly opened his eyes, they indicated entire composure.

"High-chamberlain von Schladen," asked Stein, "you have made the long journey from Memel to

this place for no other purpose than to deliver to me these letters and the order of the king?"

"It was the only object of my journey," said M. von Schladen. "I travelled by way of Copenhagen and Hamburg, in order to avoid French spies."

"And when do you intend setting out again?" asked the baron.

"Your excellency, as soon as I have obtained a reply."

"Ah," exclaimed Stein, with a gentle smile; "you want to prevent me, then, from writing immediately, that I may retain you for some time as a welcome guest?"

"No, your excellency, let me entreat you to give me at once your reply to the solicitations with which the king and the queen—all Prussia—nay, all Germany turn to you, and implore you to lend to the fatherland your strong arm."

"Alas, my hand is so feeble that it can scarcely hold a pen!" said Baron von Stein, sighing. "Wilhelmina, you are always my kind and obliging friend—will you now also lend me your hand, and be my secretary?"

The baroness cast a mournful and loving look on him. "I read in your eyes," she said, sadly, "that you have made up your mind, and that, even though I implore you to desist for my sake and that of our children, it would be in vain. We shall lose you again; your house and my heart will be lonely, and only my thoughts will travel with you! But it hardly becomes me to dissuade you from your purpose. In these days of general distress it does not behoove German patriots to confine themselves to the happiness of their own firesides, and to shut their ears against the cries of the fatherland. Your heart, I know, belongs to me. Your mind and your abilities belong to the world. Go, then, my beloved husband, and do your duty; I will fulfil mine." She kissed the baron's forehead, and then stepped to the table at the window. "Your secretary is ready," she said, taking the pen; tell me what to write."

Baron von Stein raised himself, and dictated in a firm voice as follows:

"To the King's Majesty:—Your gracious orders and the offer of the department of the interior, have been communicated to me by a letter from Minister von Hardenberg, *de dato* Memel, July 10, which I received on the 9th of August. I accept the office unconditionally, and leave it to your royal majesty to arrange with what persons, or in what relations to my colleagues, I am to discharge my duties. At this moment of my country's distress it would be wrong to consult my own personal grievances, particularly as your majesty manifests so exalted a constancy in adversity.

"I should have set out immediately, but a violent tertian fever is confining me to my bed; as soon as my health is better, which I trust will be the case in ten days or two weeks, I shall hasten to your majesty. Your obedient servant,

"Stein."

Baron von Stein kept his word. Two weeks afterward, although still suffering and feeble, he entered his travelling-coach to repair to Memel, and to hold again in his powerful hands the reins of the Prussian government.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JOHANNES VON MULLER.

The French authorities had informed the municipality of Berlin that peace had been concluded at Tilsit, between the Emperor of the French and the King of Prussia. They ordered that the inhabitants of Berlin, in view of this important event, should manifest their gratification in a public manner. German singers were to perform a *Te Deum* at the cathedral in honor of this treaty, and at night the people were to show, by a general illumination, that they rejoiced at the restoration of peace. The rulers of the city had issued orders to this effect, and the citizens were obliged to obey, although deeply affected by the humiliating terms of the treaty, which the *Berlin Telegraph* had communicated in a jubilant editorial. The capital of Prussia had to celebrate the disgrace of the country by a festive illumination. But the public officials could not compel the people to give their hearts to such outward rejoicings, or even to manifest their approval by their presence. At the cathedral, the organist with his choristers sang the ordered *Te Deum* to the accompaniment of kettle-drums, but the church was empty. Only the French officers and a few hired renegades witnessed the solemnity.

At night, all Berlin was in a blaze of colored flame, but the streets were deserted. No glad populace were thronging them—no cheering or merry laughter was to be heard; only here and there, troops of French soldiers were loitering and singing loudly; or a crowd of idlers, such as are to be found wherever their curiosity can be gratified, and who, devoid of honor and character, are the same in all cities. The better classes remained at home, and disdained to cast even a fugitive glance on the dazzling scene. Nowhere had more lights been kindled than were ordered by the French authorities. At one house, however, on

Behren Street, a more brilliant illumination was to be seen; variegated lamps were there artisticallly grouped around two busts that stood in strange harmony, side by side, and excited the astonishment of all passers-by. They were the busts of Frederick the Great and Napoleon, on whose foreheads beamed the same radiant light. At this house lived Johannes von Müller, the historian of Switzerland, who had caused this exhibition to be made, and who surveyed his work with smiling face. "It is all right," he said to himself, "it is a beautiful spectacle—those splendid heads; and it does my heart good that I have succeeded in this annoyance to my opponents. They shall see that I am not afraid of their attacks, and that I am quietly pursuing my career, in spite of their slanders. They call me a renegade, because I did not escape with the rest; they call me a friend of the French, because I delivered a French address at the Academy on the birthday of Frederick the Great, and their vulgar minds were displeased because in that speech I dared to compare Napoleon with Frederick. It is also distasteful to them that I have renounced the title of secret councillor of war, and call myself, briefly and simply, Johannes Müller. As if a title were not a superfluous addition to Johannes Müller, whom Germany loved before he had a title, and whom she will love when he has one no longer. Yes, my enemies envy my glory, they call me a friend of the French simply because I do not abuse them in their absence, and in their presence keep quiet and assume a stupid indifference. I keep my hands free; I write openly; I am no hidden reviler of the French, but a public worshipper of all that is sublime. For this reason I have placed here, side by side, the busts of the two greatest men to whom the last century has given birth. And now, great heroes! shine calmly in the radiance which a man whom the people have honored with the name of the German Tacitus, has kindled for you! Shed your lustre on the city, and tell the Germans that Johannes von Müller does homage to genius, regardless of nationality or birth! Watch over the study of the historian, and while he works guard him from the spirits of evil!" He waved his hands to the busts, and was about to sit down to his books and papers, when his old servant entered to inform him that a gentleman wished to see the councillor of war immediately.

"Michael Fuchs," exclaimed Müller, "how often have I told you not to address me by that absurd title, which, I hope, I shall soon cast off as the ripe chestnut its capsule. Councillor of War! For my part, I never counselled any one to commence this senseless war, and now that there is peace, I scarcely regard myself as a Prussian functionary; and yet you continue repeating that ridiculous title!"

"Well, well," said the old servant, smiling, "when we received that title four years ago, we were overjoyed and felt very proud. It is true, times have changed, and I believe that Clarke, the French general, with whom we dined again today, does not like the title much. We may, therefore, cast it aside. But, sir, while we are quarrelling here, the gentleman outside is waiting to be admitted."

"You are right, Michael Fuchs," said Johannes von Müller, in a gentle tone, as if he desired to pacify him; "let the stranger come in."

Old Michael nodded pleasantly to his master. Opening the door and stepping out, he said aloud: "Come in, sir! I have announced you, and M. von Müller awaits you."

"He is a very good, faithful old fellow!" murmured Johannes von Müller, meeting the visitor who was entering the room.

"Oh, M. von Nostitz," exclaimed Müller, joyously, "you here in Berlin! I thought you were on your estates."

"I was not on my estates, but at Memel with our king," said M. von Nostitz, gravely. "Honored with some commissions by his majesty, I have arrived here, and as one of them concerns you, Mr. Councillor, I have hastened to call upon you."

"The king, then, has received my letter at last and grants my resignation?" asked Müller, quickly.

"The king has received your letter," replied M. von Nostitz.

"And my resignation? You come to notify me that it has been accepted?" exclaimed Müller, impatiently.

"Then you are really in earnest about your request?" asked M. von Nostitz, almost sternly. "I must tell you that none of us would believe it, and that I have come to entreat you in the name of the king and the queen—in the name of all your friends, who, faithful to their duty, followed the royal couple, to change your mind and remain with us. The queen, especially, refuses to believe that Johannes von Müller, the great historian, who, but a few months ago, spoke and wrote for Prussia with so ardent an enthusiasm, now intends to leave us voluntarily and to escape in faithless egotism from the calamities that have overwhelmed us all. I am to beg you in the name of the queen to remain with us. Her majesty cannot and will not believe that you are in earnest about this resolution to resign your office and leave the country

She has commissioned me to beg you not to treat the state at this critical juncture in so ignominious a manner as to despair of it, and assures you that your salary will always be punctually paid. She admonishes you through me to think of your numerous friends here, of the favorable disposition of the Prussian government toward you, of the agreeable life you are leading in Berlin, and, finally, of the work on Frederick the Great, which you have just commenced, and to remain in the Prussian service."

"The kindness and solicitude manifested by her majesty cannot but profoundly touch my heart," exclaimed Müller, in a tremulous voice, "and I wish from the bottom of my heart, which is truly loyal and devoted to the royal house of Prussia, that I were allowed to comply with these gracious words. Her majesty and all my friends know the high opinion and sanguine hopes which I entertain with regard to Prussia, and that I feel convinced Providence has intrusted to this state the championship of truth, liberty, and justice in Germany. The queen is right also in saying that I am leading quite an agreeable life here; and that Berlin, if it should become a great centre of education for the north, would be a highly interesting place. It is very true, too, that I have warm friends here; that I am living at a fine villa; that I have no indispensable duties to perform every day, and that my salary has hitherto been promptly paid. But I confess I feel attracted toward my dear friends in Southern Germany and Switzerland. I am longing for peace and quiet, to finish my history of the land of Tell, but here I do not see any prospect of it. I am afraid, on the contrary, that the ferment and commotion of affairs will last a good while yet. I have been assured that important reforms and reductions in the financial administration of the country are in contemplation, and that men of high rank, who have served the state for half a century, and are by no means wealthy, will suffer; how, then, could I hope that these reforms would leave me untouched, when I have been but three years in the Prussian service?"

"That is to say, you are afraid of losing your salary, notwithstanding the queen's assurances?" asked M. von Nostitz.

"That is to say, I am unfortunately not rich enough to be contented with less; I have nothing but my salary, and have to pay my debts with it. When Prussia lost two-thirds of her revenues, I offered to give up my position here, which yields me an income of three thousand dollars. I believe that was honorable, and will cast no reproach on my character and sentiments."

"That is to say, sir, you tendered your resignation because the King of Würtemberg offered you a professorship at the University of Tübingen."

"But I should never have accepted it had I not deemed it incumbent upon me not to receive any money at the hands of Prussia at a time when her exchequer is hardly able to pay the salary of a superfluous savant. Take into consideration that, when I accept this offer, which would first necessitate my removal from the Prussian service, I cannot assuredly be charged with having done so from motives of avarice. Other reasons impel me to leave a pleasant position in the finest city of Germany, and move to a small university town, where I shall have only half the salary I am receiving here. I shall live in a remote corner of the world, but be enabled to lead a calm, undisturbed life, and finish the works I have commenced."

"All my remonstrances, the wishes of the queen, the exhortations of your friends, are in vain, then?" asked M. von Nostitz.

"I requested his majesty the King of Prussia in an autograph letter to accept my resignation," said Müller, evasively; "I want, above all, a categorical reply whether I must remain or go."

"You may go, sir," exclaimed Nostitz, almost contemptuously. Taking a paper from his memorandum-book, he added, "here, sir, is your dismission. I was ordered to deliver it into your hands only when my solicitations and the representations made in the name of the queen should make no impression upon you. You are free; the king dismisses you from the service; Prussia has nothing further to do with you. Seek your fortune elsewhere; your glory you will leave here. Farewell!" Saluting him haughtily, and without giving him time to reply, M. von Nostitz turned and left the room.

Johannes von Müller gazed after him with a long, mournful look. "Another man who will charge me before my friends and before the world with treachery, perfidy, and meanness!" he said, shrugging his shoulders. "Oh, stupidity and empty words! They want to accuse me of treachery because it suits them best, and because they refuse to comprehend that a poor savant ought at least to be protected from want in order to be able to live for science. A reduction of salaries and pensions is impending; I owe it to myself and to the works I have commenced, to provide against this misfortune, and to seek a place where I can labor without being disturbed, and, thank God! I have found it. Now I may go to Tübingen, for I am free!" He took the paper from the table, and hastily breaking the

seal read the contents. "Yes," he repeated, "I am free! I can go. All hail Tübingen! so near the Alps, so near the grand old forest! In thy tranquillity I will return to my early enthusiasm as to the bride of my youth! My history of Switzerland will at last be completed and bequeathed to posterity! Already methinks I breathe the pure air of the mountains; and sunny Italy, while I cannot return to her, invites me to thee, quiet Tübingen!"

Johannes von Müller did not perceive that, while he was speaking to himself, the door behind him had softly opened, and a gentleman, wrapped in a cloak, his face shaded by a broad-brimmed hat, had entered the room and overheard the last words. The savant, staring at the muscular form of this stranger, drew back in surprise. "What does this mean?" he muttered. "Where is Michael Fuchs?"

"Michael Fuchs is outside, and considers it very natural that an old friend should desire to surprise his master rather than be solemnly announced," said the stranger, approaching and taking off his hat.

"Frederick von Gentz!" exclaimed Müller, in a joyful voice, yet not altogether free from fear. "My friend, you dare to come hither, and yet you must know that the emperor of the French is highly exasperated at you; that he believes you to be the author of all sorts of seditious pamphlets, and that it would be very agreeable to him to have you arrested and confined."

"Yes, it is true," said Gentz, in his careless, merry way, "Napoleon Bonaparte does me the honor of being afraid of me and my pen, and would like to render me harmless, as he did poor Palm. Once I was in imminent danger of falling into the hands of his police, and I escaped in disguise, but only after a great deal of trouble."

"And yet you dare to come to the seat of the French administration in Germany?" exclaimed Müller. "Oh, my friend, your danger nearly deprives me of the delight I feel in seeing you again, and I have to mingle my loving salutations with warnings and presentiments!"

"You are right; I was rather bold in entering the cobweb of the French spiders," said Gentz. "Still, it is not so dangerous as you believe, and you may be perfectly at ease so far as I am concerned. I am here with a charming lady friend, the Princess Bagration. I figured on her passport as her private secretary, and have a regular Russian one of my own, purporting to be issued to M. de Gentzowitch. Besides, no one suspects me here; we have just arrived, and will leave Berlin to-morrow before daybreak to return to Dresden. We are now at peace with France, and the authorities here will hardly dare to lay hands on a subject of the Emperor of Russia, the friend and admirer of the Emperor of the French. You see, therefore, you need not be afraid about me, and I may safely chat with you for an hour here in your study."

"Then, my dear friend, let me welcome you," exclaimed Müller; "let us enjoy this hour, and renew the pledge of friendship." Müller welcomed Gentz with great cordiality, but the latter did not share the ardor of his friend."

"You have remained faithful to our reminiscences?" Gentz asked, as Müller led him to the sofa, and sat by his side. "You have not forgotten the past, and your heart still retains its old friendship?" While uttering these words, he fixed his dark eyes on the face of Johannes von Müller, who seemed not to be able to bear his steadfast gaze, and became embarrassed.

"Oh, my friend!" he exclaimed, "how can you ask whether I remember other days? My heart frequently feels exalted at the idea of friendship, which so few can appreciate at its true value. What attachment was that of Jonathan, himself a victorious warrior, for Jesse's noble son! How great Jonathan was, who knew that the throne of Israel would pass from his house to David! I was always affected by David's exclamation at Jonathan's death. I thought of it just now. And Scipio had a disinterested friendship for Lælius, although he was aware that envious men desired to rob him of the glory of having conquered Carthage, and ascribed every thing to the skilful plans of Laelius. Just as if, when I narrate the heroic deeds of our ancestors, some one should say, 'The best passages were written by his friend!' What Scipio felt was once illustrated, at a private dinner, by Ferdinand of Brunswick, the hero of Crefeld and Minden. He also had a friend, and to him were attributed the successes of the prince. Ferdinand himself smilingly said to me, 'Between real friends it is a matter of indifference to whom the credit is given.' Oh, the spirits of David, Jonathan, and Scipio, must have rejoiced at these words as heartily as I did. So, my dear Gentz, you ask me whether I have forgotten our friendship?"

"Words, words!" exclaimed Gentz, indignantly. "Instead of deeds, you have nothing but words. I will speak to you plainly, and with the sincerity of a true German. That is what I have come for."

"Like a true German?" repeated Müller. "Are there still any true Germans? Are they not by this time extinct, leaving behind only slaves and

renegades? This is not the age for true Germans, and if any really exist, they ought to hide themselves and be silent."

"And you can say that—you who once called so enthusiastically for deeds?" exclaimed Gentz, indignantly. "Listen to me, Johannes von Müller! I tell you once more, it is for your sake that I have come. I wanted to appear before you either as your guilty conscience or as your friend, as your judge or as your ally. I refused to believe in all that was told me about you. I would trust only my own ears, my own eyes. Johannes von Müller, I have come to ask you: Do you still remember the oath we took in so solemn a manner at Frankfort?"

"I do," said Johannes von Müller, timidly. "Carried away by the enthusiasm of our hopes, we covenanted for the welfare of Germany, and especially for her deliverance from foreign tyranny."

"We swore to unite in active love for Germany, and in active hatred against France," exclaimed Gentz, solemnly. "I have fulfilled my oath; I have toiled incessantly for the deliverance of Germany. The persecutions I have suffered at the hands of the French, and Napoleon's wrath, speak for me! I have well improved my time. But what have you done? Where are the friends enlisted for our covenant? Where are the allies gathered around you to assist against France? The time for action is coming, and we must be ready to fight the battle and expel the tyrant. Johannes von Müller, where are the troops you have enlisted—the men you have gained over to our cause?"

"I have enlisted no troops—prepared no battles, and concentrated no corps," said Müller, sighing. "On the battle-field of Jena lie buried not only our soldiers, but our hopes. The disaster is boundless; name, rights, existence—all gone! A new order of things is at hand. The great period of many monarchies, since the downfall of the Roman empire, is closed. No other path to prosperity and glory remains to us than that of the arts of peace; we cannot succeed by war."

"It is true, then, exclaimed Gentz, mournfully, "that you are a traitor and a renegade, and have not been slandered! You have not only lost your faith, but the consciousness of your perfidy! Oh, I refused to believe it; I thought it was impossible. I did have confidence in you. It was well known to me that you had long since lost your courage and inclination to struggle for our cause. I was also aware that, even before the commencement of the war between Prussia and France, your irresolution and timidity had increased. I was not greatly surprised, therefore, that you remained at Berlin when all faithful men left the capital, or, as some assert, you returned hither agreeably to an invitation from the French. After this, I was no longer astonished at seeing you repudiate your principles, your glory, your friends, the cause of Germany, every thing great and good that you had advocated for years, and truckle in the most cowardly manner to the conqueror, carry on disgraceful secret negotiations with him, and issue equivocal declarations and confessions; but that you should betray all that ought to be dear to you—that you should publicly renounce your principles—of such treachery I never deemed you capable!"

"And where did I commit any such treachery?" asked Müller, reproachfully; "where did I secretly or publicly renounce all that had hitherto been dear to me? Tell me, accuse me! I will justify myself! This will show you how ardently I love you, for I will accept you as a judge of my actions, and allow you to acquit me or to find me guilty."

"Be it so!" exclaimed Gentz. "I do not stand before you as an individual; but as the voice of Germany—of posterity, that will judge and condemn you if you are unable to justify yourself. Listen to the charges, and reply to them! Why did you remain in Berlin when the court fled; when all those who were loyal to the king and his cause left the capital, because they refused to bow their heads to the French yoke?"

"I remained because I did not see any reason for fleeing. I am no prominent politician; politics, on the contrary, are only a matter of secondary importance to me. My principal sphere is science, and every thing connected with it. Now I was better able to serve it here than elsewhere. I had my books here, and a large number was on the way to me; accordingly, I had to wait for them; besides I had commenced studying the royal archives of Berlin to obtain material for my history of Frederick II. These are the reasons why I remained, and I confess to you that I had no cause to repent of it. No one injured me, or asked any thing dishonorable of me; no one insisted on my doing any thing incompatible with my duty and loyalty; on the contrary, all treated me politely. They seemed to regard me as one of the ancients, living only in and for posterity. Never before was the dignity of historical science honored in a more delicate manner than by the treatment I received at the hands of the French. Thus, amid the crash of falling thrones, I have quietly continued at my history of Switzerland, written articles for several reviews, and

made extracts from many of the ancient classics, from the whole *Muratorian Thesaurus*, and from other printed and manuscript volumes. This, my friend, is a brief sketch of the quiet and retired life I have led since the disastrous day of Jena."

"You forgot to mention several essential points in your sketch," said Gentz, sternly. "You did not allude to your friendly intercourse with Napoleon's prætorians; you forgot even to refer to the remarkable visit you paid to the Emperor of the French. How could you, who so recently in public addresses had called upon every one to rise against the usurper—how could you dare to enter the lion's lair without fearing lest he strike you dead by a single blow? Napoleon Bonaparte might invite me twenty times in the most flattering manner, I should still take care to refuse, for I feel convinced that I should never return. The bullets that struck Palm's breast would be remoulded for me. How did it come that you did not feel any such apprehensions? How could you hope that the French would forgive your former Prussian patriotism, unless you had made concessions to them—unless you had proved recreant to the cause to which you had hitherto adhered?"

"I made no concessions. They were unnecessary; no one asked me to make them," said Johannes von Müller, gently. "I remained in Berlin, because I was unable to flee with my whole library, and because I was no more bribed by France than by England, or any other power."

"Ah, I understand you; you will now turn the table, and accuse me instead of justifying yourself. It is a very common thing nowadays to tell marvellous stories about the large sums with which England has bribed me to speak and write against the usurper, who tramples upon our freedom and nationality. You can scarcely open a newspaper without finding in it, side by side with eulogies of the great German historian, and of the gratifying manner in which 'Napoleon, the hero, whose eagle-eye discerns every thing, knew how to appreciate his merits,' systematic attacks against me, and allusions to the rumor that I had been bribed by England."

"I did not intend accusing you," said Müller. "I am only justifying myself; first, as to my remaining here, and, secondly, as to the visit I paid to the Emperor Napoleon. He sent for me, and, rest assured, I did nothing whatever to bring about this invitation. Ought I to have refused? He did not say a word about the king, the queen, myself, my wishes or plans. Dear friend, will you permit me to relate to you the particulars of my interview with Napoleon? Will you listen to me quietly, so as to judge for yourself whether that visit, which has been censured so severely, was really so great a crime, so terrible a perfidy against Germany, as my enemies have seen fit to pretend?"

"Speak! I told you already that I come to accuse you in the name of Germany and of posterity, and to listen to your justification."

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE CALL.

JOHANNES VON MULLER shook his head, and as he spoke his voice grew louder, and his face kindled with enthusiasm. "M. Alexander von Humboldt had made me acquainted with the French minister of state, M. Maret, who frequently invited me, with Humboldt and some other *savants*, to dine with him, and seemed to like my conversation. One morning he called to inform me that the Emperor Napoleon desired to receive me at seven o'clock in the evening. At the hour appointed I rode to Maret, and was introduced to Napoleon, who was seated by himself on a sofa; several persons, unknown to me, stood in a remote corner of the room. The emperor commenced by referring to the history of Switzerland, and told me I ought to finish it, because the more recent period of the history of that country was by no means devoid of interest. From Swiss history we passed to the history and constitution of ancient Greece, to the theory of constitutions, to the striking difference of those of the Asiatic nations, and the causes of this difference, to be found in the climate and in polygamy, to the widely different characters of the Arabs (whom the emperor extolled very highly), and the Tartars, which led us to the invasions always threatening civilization from that side, and the necessity of raising a bulwark against them. We then spoke of the real value of European culture, and stated that there never had been greater freedom, security of property, humanity, and better times in general, than since the fifteenth century; further, that there was a mysterious concatenation in all terrestrial events, that every thing was directed by the inscrutable dispensations of an invisible hand, and that the emperor himself had become great by the very actions of his enemies. We referred to the great confederation of nations, an idea that had already been entertained by Henry IV.; to the sources

and necessity of religion; we said that man was, perhaps, not able to bear the whole dazzling truth, and required to be kept in bounds; but that, nevertheless, it was possible to bring about a happy order of things if the numerous wars ceased that had been produced by constitutions too intricate, such as that of Germany, and by the intolerable burdens imposed on nations by large standing armies. A great many other things were said, and, in fact, almost all countries and nations were alluded to. The emperor spoke at first in his ordinary tone, but in a lower voice as the conversation became more interesting, so that I had to bend down, and no one else could have understood what he said. I myself shall never repeat several statements he made on this occasion. I contradicted him repeatedly, and he entered into a discussion with me.

"If I am to speak impartially, I must say that Napoleon's knowledge, the correctness of his observations, his understanding, the grandeur of his views, filled me with admiration, while the amiable manner in which he spoke to me could not but enlist my affection. A few marshals and the Prince de Benevento in the mean time entered the room, but he did not interrupt himself. After I had conversed with him about an hour and a half, he ordered the concert to commence, and I do not know whether it was a mere accident or whether he did so to oblige me, but he asked the musicians to play Swiss airs, and among them the *Ranz des Vaches*. He then bowed to me kindly, and left the room. I must confess I was fascinated. Since my conference with Frederick II., twenty-four years ago, I never had a more interesting interview, at least none with a prince; if my memory does not deceive me, the emperor's conversation was even more solid and comprehensive than that of Frederick, who did not conceal his admiration for the views of Voltaire. For the rest, Napoleon's tone is firm and vigorous, but there is as winning an expression about his mouth as there was about that of Frederick. It was one of the most remarkable days of my life. Napoleon conquered me, too, by his genius and unaffected kindness. This, my friend," said Müller, "is a faithful account of what occurred during my visit to him, and how I was charmed by his genius."

"Woe to you that he succeeded!" exclaimed Gentz—"that he confused your understanding and infatuated your judgment. Are you, then, really in earnest about this admiration and fulsome praise of a man whom you abhorred formerly—to whom at Frankfort you vowed everlasting hatred—whom, in your wrath, you called the scourge that was torturing us, that we might be aroused from our stupor? Do you now seriously praise him as the great genius to whom we ought to do homage and bow as humble worshippers?"

"Yes, I say that Providence has intrusted to him the most sublime mission," exclaimed Müller. "I feel convinced that God has given him the empire of the world. Never before has this been more apparent than in the late war, in which he obtained victories with which only those of Arbela and Zama can be compared. Inasmuch as the old and rusty order of things was doomed to disappear, it was fortunate that these victories were vouchsafed to Napoleon and to a nation that is distinguished for its culture, and appreciates the toils of learned men far more readily than other nations. Just as little as Cicero, Livy, and Horace, concealed from the great Cæsar, or from Augustus, that they had formerly been opposed to him, have I concealed that I had belonged to a different party, or rather entertained different views, which, the issues being decided, I willingly give up, ready, if not to coöperate in, at least to become the impartial historian of the reorganization of the world. Now, it is an inexpressibly edifying occupation to raise our eyes from the ruins of Europe to the whole connection of history—to seek for the causes of events, and boldly to remove a little the veil that covers the probable future. These ideas seem to me so grand and gratifying that they fill my soul, absorbing all my reflections. Thus I try to prepare as well as I can for what is to come. History teaches me that, when the time for a great change arrives, resistance against it is utterly useless. True wisdom consists in a correct perception of the signs of the times, and true virtue is not transformed into vice when this or that phase passes away. The ruler of the world will certainly never overlook him who demonstrates his manhood, and whose skill and courage entitle him to human respect."

"Yes," exclaimed Gentz, laughing scornfully, "you are indeed a true man! When the country was overwhelmed with calamities—when your friends, whom your clarion-notes once led to the charge—when the royal couple that had overwhelmed you with manifestations of kindness and esteem, and all the loyal and faithful fled, you acted like a true man! You only thought of yourself and your personal interests, and forgot what you once swore to me, and in reference to which I stand before you at this hour. Johannes von Müller, I renounce you forevermore! Germany will accept no further services at your hands, even though you should desire to espouse her

cause again, for no one reposes confidence in the faithless. Posterity will honor Johannes von Müller, the historian; but they will despise Johannes von Müller, the man. I know you now thoroughly. Your whole character is a strange error nature committed in uniting intellect of extraordinary strength with one of the feeblest souls. The many sublime thoughts, the ingenious and often profound combinations which for many years have characterized your pen, were apparently intended only for others; you yourself derive no benefit from them. You are, and will ever be, the plaything of every accidental and momentary impression. Always ready to acknowledge and embrace whatever came near you, you were never able to feel either enduring hatred or attachment. Your life is a mere capitulation. If the Evil One himself should appear on earth in visible form, I could show him the way by which he could league with you within twenty-four hours. The true source of your inconsistency is the fact that, separated from all good and true men, and surrounded by knaves and fools, you see and hear nothing but what is ignoble and false. If you could have made up your mind to leave Berlin, you would probably have been saved. Your real guilt consists in your staying here; the remainder of your faults were only consequences of it. Whether this judgment is more lenient or rigorous, more mortifying or honorable, than that which you may expect at the hands of the public, I will not decide. As for myself, it is conclusive."

"But it is not for me," exclaimed Müller, with grave dignity. "I forgive you the insults you have thrown into my face; and, instead of turning away from you in silence, and in the consciousness of right, I will address you a last word of justification; for you know full well that I have loved you, and my heart renounces reluctantly its dream of friendship. You have preferred serious charges against me; you have threatened me with the judgment of posterity; but posterity will have better ideas of justice than you, whose eyes are blinded by partisan feelings and political hatred. It is true, I have said on every page of my works that men ought not to shrink from sacrificing their lives for their country, for truth, and justice; but I am unconscious of having done any thing to the contrary, nor have I ever been exposed to such an alternative. Never have I changed my principles. What I desired when I entered into the covenant with you at Frankfort, was to bring about a firm alliance between Austria and Prussia, and thereby to transform Germany into a strong power, interposing the two great empires. For that purpose I have striven, acted, spoken, and written. My utterances were not listened to, and the year 1805 destroyed all my hopes. The times changed, but my principles did not, based as they are on the great truth of all possible liberty, dignity, and happiness for the nations, according to their different circumstances and peculiarities. Never, however, did I permit personal considerations to influence me; I wrote for Prussia in the good cause of the princes' league, and against Prussia in the bad one of the separate peace. It is true, I was not quiet with regard to the blunders committed: I did not encourage the mad expectations of the war-party, and was opposed to misleading the public by false rumors and inflammatory appeals. I desired the truth, and proclaimed it; but the so-called German patriots think I ought to have kept silence. When the Jews were warned with tearful eyes to submit to the conqueror, into whose hands Providence had delivered Asia for a certain time, they deemed it patriotic to persecute the prophet, but Jerusalem was burned. Why did he not keep silence? Because God commanded him to speak. That is the servility, the faithlessness, and treachery with which I am now reproached. Hypocrites! Every crime has its motive. Did I intend to increase my glory? Certainly not. It was self-interest, then? Yes!—to give up the beautiful city of Berlin, the title of councillor of war, and a salary of three thousand dollars, doubtless to go to Paris and receive a large pension from the French government! No! but to accept a professorship of two thousand florins in the little town of Tübingen, and to have the honor to work hard to pay my debts! That is the brilliant position which is asserted to have induced me to sacrifice my nation, my liberty, and my honor. I am tired of sacrificing myself, of toiling incessantly, and of being exposed to danger, in an ungrateful age and for a degenerate nation, cowardly in deed, slanderous in word, and senseless in hope. A supreme intelligence is ruling over us; one era is past; another is approaching, and of what character it will be, depends on our own reformation! It was Providence that sent Napoleon as the instrument of the transition. I acquiesce in the dispensation of God, who, during the latter centuries, has so ordered events as to prevent mankind from receding from the degree of civilization they had attained. The people must take heart, concentrate their moral and mental strength, and devote themselves to the culture of the peaceful and the good. That is my last confession. If you understand me, and it satisfies you, give me your hand, and we are reconciled; if you wish to con-

tinue to misrepresent me and condemn my course, farewell! for, in that case, our paths diverge forever."

"Let us, then, pursue different paths!" exclaimed Gentz, contemptuously, taking his hat and preparing to leave. "I go, but not without painful emotion. Let your heart, in memory of the past, tell you whether I have judged correctly. I feel what it is to lose you! As a friend of patriotism, I pass an inexorable sentence on you; as a man, as your former friend, I feel nothing but compassion—to hate you is beyond my power. If God fulfil our wishes, and crown my efforts and those of my companions, then there will be but one punishment for you, and it will be terrible. Law and order will return, the robber and the usurper be humbled, and Germany, flourishing under the rule of wise sovereigns, will again be free; but you will have to stand aloof, and never be permitted to join in the sacred hymns of our patriots! Farewell!" He turned and hastily left the room.

Johannes von Müller gazed after him mournfully. "I have lost another friend! Ah, I wish I could escape into the grave from all this turmoil—these painful misunderstandings and broken friendships." Standing silent, he placed his hand over his tearful eyes. "No," he said; "I will not despair! The hand of Providence is everywhere; it will support and protect me. I have lost a friend; very well, I will return to my immortal friends—to the ancients! They never cease to instruct and strengthen me by their exalted sentiments." He stepped to his desk, and, sitting down, seized one of the large open volumes. "Come and console me, Juvenal," he exclaimed, enthusiastically. "You are to me rather a new friend, whom I have learned but lately to understand thoroughly. O Juvenal! let the fire burning in your works warm my heart, and invigorate me by your words, which are among the priceless treasures of mankind!" He bent over the book and commenced reading. His face, which, at first, had been melancholy, soon assumed a serene and almost good-humored expression, and, forgetful of the present, he became entirely absorbed in reading the Roman author.

All was silent in his room. The busts of Napoleon and Frederick looked down on the illuminated but deserted street, as if they were guarding the great historian from any evil thoughts or cowardly despondency that perchance might disturb his thoughts. Suddenly a horseman galloped up, and a carriage approached the house. Two gentlemen alighted and entered. Johannes von Müller saw and heard nothing. He read and copied such passages from old Juvenal as pleased him best.

Some one rapped violently at the door, and a deep voice called out in French, "May I enter?"

"General Clarke!" exclaimed Johannes von Müller, almost in dismay, starting up and rushing toward the door; but, before he reached it, the French governor of Berlin, General Clarke, appeared, followed by a young orderly, whose dusty uniform told that he had just left the highway and the saddle.

"M. Johannes von Müller," exclaimed Clarke, cordially nodding, and offering his hand to the *savant*. "See what I bring you!"

"Well," asked Müller, in surprise, "what does your excellency bring?"

"I bring you a courier whom the minister of state, M. Maret, by order of the emperor has sent you, and who has been hunting for you all over Germany. At Frankfort he was informed you were already at Tübingen, and on arriving there he learned that you had not yet left Berlin, although you had been expected for six months."

"I could not go," said Müller; "I had not yet received my dismissal; it arrived only to-day."

"It is well it came to-day," exclaimed Clarke; "it has arrived just in time. My friend," he added, turning to the courier, "this is M. von Müller; deliver the letter into his hands."

The courier produced a large letter to which an official seal was attached. "When can you let me have the reply?" he asked. "I have been instructed to return to Paris without delay."

"The reply?" said Müller. "But I do not yet know the question?"

"My learned friend," exclaimed Clarke, laughing, "this game of questions and answers with Napoleon resembles a thunderstorm; almost as soon as the flash is seen, the thunder is heard. There must be no hesitation—no delay. It is the emperor that asks. Permit the courier, in the mean time, to retire into the anteroom. On crossing it, I noticed a sofa. You will permit him to take a little rest until your reply is ready. I have also commissioned your servant to fetch a glass of wine and some food. You must take into consideration that the poor fellow has been on horseback, day and night, and has but just left the saddle."

"Go, sir," exclaimed Müller, in an impressive voice, "take a little rest and some food. I am sorry that I have caused you so much trouble."

"And now, sir," said Clarke, when the courier had left the room, "read the letter from Minister Maret."

Johannes von Müller broke the seal and opened the paper with a trembling hand. While he was reading, a blush suffused his face, and an exclamation of joyful surprise burst from his lips. "This letter contains extraordinary news! I am to go to Paris! I am to receive an important office that I have never solicited!"

"Yes, sir, you are to go to Paris, and, as speedily as possible," said Clarke, smiling. "I also received a letter from the minister by this courier, and his excellency requests me to have you set out without delay. It is the emperor's order, sir, and must be complied with. His majesty himself has appointed you to the exalted position which you are to fill at the court of his brother, the King of Westphalia. Jerome's kingdom sprang from the soil of Germany in a night; hence it is right that you should be his minister of public instruction. That is the office to be intrusted to you, sir. The emperor has so ordered it. He promised his brother a minister of the German nation."

"I, a poor bookworm, who have had more intercourse with the dead than the living—I am to become a minister! That will not do. I lack the necessary ability and experience."

"Nonsense, sir!" exclaimed Clarke; "when the emperor bestows an office on a man, he gives him the understanding required for it. Hesitation is injurious, because it only postpones your departure. Please notice that you have not been asked whether you wish to accept or not, but that the emperor orders your presence, and that quickly. I shall lend you my own travelling-coach, and send my secretary with you. You will travel by way of Mentz and Strasburg, and in five days you you must be at Fontainebleau, where the emperor is awaiting you to give you further instructions. Well, when do you intend to set out?"

"When shall I set out? I feel as one dreaming, or as if all this were the play of my imagination."

"You will have to admit, however, that it is at least brilliant. It is worth while, I should think, to make a journey to Paris to receive the appointment of cabinet-minister. I ask you again, When will you set out? Remember, it is the emperor that calls you."

"Oh, then he has not forgotten me, the great man!" exclaimed Müller. "After so many victories, he still remembers that interview in which I learned to admire him. I must not be ungrateful for so gratifying a remembrance. Only sublime and salutary ideas spring from the head of Jove; hence, I submit in every respect to his will, and shall go to him to receive his orders and comply with his wishes."

"Well said!" exclaimed Clarke. "You will set out to-morrow morning. I shall prepare every thing that is necessary. But, remember, the courier is waiting for your reply. Quick, my friend!" write an answer to the minister. But few words are required. Just say to him: 'Your excellency, I come!' That will be sufficient."

Johannes von Müller, almost intoxicated with delight, hastened to his desk, and wrote a few lines. "I have written what you told me," he said, smiling, and handing the paper to the general. "I have written: 'Your excellency, I come!'"

"Now fold it up and direct it," said Clarke.

Müller did so, and gave the sealed letter to Clarke: "Well, general, here is the letter—I deliver it into your hands, and with it my future."

"Mr. Minister, permit me to congratulate you," said Clarke, smiling, and, going to the door, he gave the letter to the courier.

"Minister!" said Johannes von Müller, with a joyful air, "I am to be a minister!" But suddenly his face became gloomy. "Alas!" he murmured, "now my country will call me a traitor indeed, and Gentz will seem to be right in denouncing me as an apostate, and accusing me of having tendered my resignation to obtain a more lucrative office. Well, no matter," he exclaimed, after a pause, "let them denounce and slander me! My conscience acquits me, and I may be permitted, after all, to be useful to Germany in my new position. May God in His mercy guide me!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

FINANCIAL CALAMITIES.

"HEAVEN be praised that you are again restored to us!" exclaimed the queen, smiling gratefully, and offering her hand to Minister von Stein. "Oh, believe me, such a sunbeam is welcome to us in these dreary days of Memel."

"It is true," said Stein, sighing. "Your majesty has passed disastrous days, and I am glad that I am able again to assist my adored queen in her troubles."

She shook her head mournfully. "I do not believe in the possibility of any alleviation or change. We have suffered great misfortunes, and greater may befall us. Since the days of Jena and Auerstadt our sorrows have increased. We are constantly experiencing some new humiliation; even the treaty of Tilsit is not the climax of our

calamities. They come as an avalanche, and sometimes I wish to be buried beneath them."

"Then the last ray of hope for Prussia would disappear," said Stein. "If your majesty desert us, we are irretrievably lost, for your life, your courage, and your spirit, are the support of your husband. Without Louisa, Prussia and her king would perish."

"Oh, it is true he loves me," cheerfully exclaimed the queen. "The king treats me more affectionately than ever. And that is great happiness after a wedded life of fourteen years! I will be grateful to him as long as I live, and to Prussia for loving me. But, alas! I have no other thanks for them than my devotion and my prayers!"

"You have still your courage and a strong hope in the future of your country. You must animate the desponding and strengthen the weak. Let that be your majesty's great and holy duty."

"You are right, I must not despair," responded the queen, "and I thank you for having admonished me. Oh, it is sometimes very difficult to bear such disasters, and I feel that my health is giving way more and more. And tell me where am I to look for consolation? The storm is upon us, and where shall we find a refuge? How shall we escape the thunderbolt?"

"In our hopes for a more glorious future," said Stein, energetically.

"Future!" exclaimed Louisa. "There is no future without independence, and where is that to be found to-day? All are slaves and bow in the most abject humility to a master who, in his turn, is but the slave of his own boundless ambition and arrogance, and, alas! there is no man living who would dare to set bounds to them! Do you know how disdainfully our envoy, M. von Knobelsdorf, was treated? He was utterly unable to prefer his remonstrances and prayers that Prussia might be protected from further extortion, and that the French armies might be withdrawn. Napoleon received him but once, and then, as it were, accidentally. The Prince of Baden and Cambacères were in the room, and our ambassador was no more noticed than a crumb of bread. The emperor's attendants treated him in the same manner, and Minister Champagny remarked to Knobelsdorf that they would see how Prussia behaved. He hoped we would comply as much as possible with the emperor's wishes, for such a course would alone be likely to give us relief, and that we ought to blame no one but ourselves. Are you aware of this, and are you still hopeful and speak of a happy future?"

"Yes, I am aware of all this, and it is precisely for this reason I speak as I do," said Stein. "We must work to dispel the dangers to which your majesty referred; we must erect lightning-rods to attract the dangerous fire. If your majesty had a less vigorous soul, I should conceal from you the calamities still threatening Prussia, notwithstanding the treaty of Tilsit; but Queen Louisa is the genius of Prussia, and I apply to her for assistance!"

"Oh!" exclaimed the queen, anxiously, "bad tidings again, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Stein, sadly—"bad tidings! We have received the last propositions or rather decrees of Napoleon. He imposes on Prussia contributions amounting to one hundred and fifty millions, one-third to be paid immediately in cash; bills will be accepted for fifty millions, and estates are to be ceded to France for the last fifty millions. The five fortresses of Graudenz, Kolberg, Stettin, Küstrin, and Glogau are demanded as security for the payment. Forty thousand French soldiers are to garrison the fortresses, ten thousand of whom will be cavalry, uniformed, armed, and fed by Prussia, which is to furnish twelve millions for this purpose. The estates of the king in the districts of Magdeburg and Brandenburg, between the Elbe and the Oder, and in Pomerania, are to be ceded and disposed of in what manner the emperor may deem prudent. As the forty thousand men will be unable to find sufficient room in the five fortresses, certain districts of Prussia will have to be assigned them."

"And what remains then to the king?" exclaimed Louisa, with flaming eyes. "What remains to us?"

"This must not be," said Stein. "We must leave nothing undone—we must strain every nerve to prevent it. The disasters of Prussia compel us to shrink from nothing to avert this last and terrible blow, or the country will be hopelessly ruined. Oh, I cannot describe to you the distress, the misery, the disgrace I witnessed in the cities through which I passed on my journey. Your majesty knows that I was at Berlin; I saw that Daru and Clarke behaved in the most reckless and scornful manner, refusing with sneers to listen to any remonstrances. They seemed to be bent on oppressing and impoverishing the country, and drinking the last drop of its heart's blood! I beheld everywhere the same heart-rending spectacle that I witnessed at the capital. Every city and fortress has its systematic tormentor in some governor or commander, distinguished for arrogance and cruelty. The distress is unutterable, and yet the people hope for speedy deliverance. The eyes of all are turning with tears, it is true, but with love and hope, to Memel, the heart of the Prussian

monarchy. All the hopes of your subjects are centred in the king and the queen; to you they look for alleviation."

"Alas!" exclaimed the queen, bursting into tears, "is there, then, any way by which we can help them? Oh, name it! What can the king—what can I do to procure relief for Prussia?"

"The greatest burden at this moment is the presence of the French troops, and the oppressive conduct of the public officials, who are openly disregarding all the laws and institutions of the country, and trampling under foot the most solemn rights. We must make every possible effort to rid Prussia of these men. To accomplish this, we must, in the first place, try to find means to pay the first third of the contribution; and next, to induce Napoleon to grant us better terms for the payment of the remainder. We must endeavor to induce him to consent to a gradual liquidation (which would be more in accordance with our ability), and without insisting on retaining the fortresses as security, and oppressing us with an army of forty thousand men. In this way our exhausted treasury would not be required to pay the additional twelve millions for equipping the French soldiers, and the country would be preserved from the tyranny of a hostile occupation."

"But you may depend on it, there is no way to soften that heart of Napoleon," said the queen, sighing. "He is certainly a victorious warrior, but he is not great in the highest sense—he is not good, for he knows neither compassion nor love. He has marked out his path in lines of blood, and he pursues it over the slain of the battle-field and the ruins of once prosperous and happy nations. Napoleon has no pity, and our complaints would but gratify his pride."

"And yet we must try to dispose him to comply with our wishes," said Stein. "The king has resolved upon writing to-day to the Emperor Alexander, and imploring him to instruct Count Tolstoy, his ambassador in Paris, to remonstrate with Napoleon, and convince him of the cruelty and injustice of his demands. Oh, the king is ready, with an energy deserving the highest admiration, to do every thing to lessen the burdens under which his subjects are groaning. He himself has drawn up a financial plan to procure the first twelve millions, which we shall offer to pay immediately. He is ready to order reductions in the budget of the army, the opera, the ballet, and the extraordinary pensions. He himself sets an example of self-denial and economy. He will reduce further his household, and retain only the most indispensable servants. Notwithstanding my protestations, he insists on refusing to accept the civil list due him."

"Oh," exclaimed the queen, "who can call me unhappy when I am the wife of the noblest of men? But I will also take part in these sacrifices, and I hope the king has also refused to accept the money paid me by the state treasury."

"No, your majesty. That should not be curtailed; I would never advise it, and the king would not consent."

"But I insist," replied the queen, firmly. "My king and husband must forgive me if I choose for once to have a will of my own. If the king is ready to suffer privations, then it is my right and duty to share them."

"But your majesty ought to think of your children, who would also suffer. Pray take into consideration that the royal family would be reduced to a very small income, and that the most rigid economy could not preserve you from embarrassments. A portion of the royal estates is to be mortgaged or sold for the purpose of defraying part of the French contribution; considering the universal distress, it is very probable that the income to be derived from the other estates will not be paid at all, or very tardily. The king, moreover, gave up very considerable resources by sending the large gold dinner-set to the mint to be converted into coin, which he did not use for himself or his household, but paid into the state treasury. If your majesty, like the king, refuses to accept money from the treasury, pecuniary difficulties will arise, which will be the more painful to you, as your children will suffer, deprived of the comforts to which they have been accustomed."

"That will produce a salutary effect," said the queen, quickly. "Circumstances educate men, and it will certainly be good for my children to be familiar with something more than the sunniest side of life. If they had grown up in opulence they would ever consider it as a matter of course; but that there may be a change, they learn now from the gravity of their father, and the tears of their mother. It is especially good for the crown prince to become acquainted with adversity—when, as I hope, happier times come, he will better appreciate his prosperity. Let them share our adverse fortune! I know how to protect them from real want. I have still some means left, and the Lord will not forsake us. Do not call this stubbornness or presumption. You know we have not refrained from every exertion to lessen our calamities. I have even gone so far as to beg the Duke de Rovigo, who is now governor of East Prussia, to intercede with the emperor concerning

the contributions, and to have restored to us our estates, because they were our only possessions. Do you know the reply the duke made? He told me that all solicitations would be in vain, and even the intercession of Russia would be of no avail in regard to this matter. He added that there remained to us one way of procuring money, and he advised us to sell our plate and jewels."

"The impudent villain!" exclaimed Stein, indignantly. "How could he go so far as to use such language toward your majesty!"

"It is true," said the queen, gently, "it pained me grievously, and brought tears. Not that my heart cares for worldly splendor, but there is something inexpressibly offensive in the scorn with which those men, and particularly the Duke de Rovigo, imitate the example of their master. But, after all, that sagacious duke was right, perhaps, for useless jewels may be converted into money. I admit," added the queen, with a smile, "that I had never thought of it; it would never have occurred to me that we might get money by selling our personal property. In fact, I ought to be grateful to M. Savary for his advice."

"Your majesty," said Stein, deeply affected," "you must not think of selling your jewels. Better times will come. Even in these days of adversity there will be occasions when you must show yourself to your people at public festivities and demonstrations; they like to see their queen adorned in a regal and becoming manner."

"My most becoming ornament will be simplicity, and the tears of gratitude with which I shall receive those who wish to honor me."

"But your jewels are the heirlooms of your children, your majesty."

"The only inheritance of our children which we are not allowed to part with is our honor," said the queen, firmly. "We would not sell it for all the empires of the world. That must remain to us. As for the rest, we must learn to do without it."

"But it will greatly pain the king should your majesty sell your jewels. It will be another humiliation."

"Oh, I can conceal it from him," exclaimed the queen. "I shall sell those superfluous articles secretly. There will be no festivities here, and hence it will be unnecessary for me to appear in royal attire. Two-thirds of the money realized will pay the pensions of the king's old servants; for I know the unsettled arrears cause my husband many a pang. When these worthy men, who are to be deprived of the salaries which they so richly deserve, send in their receipts, then let my husband find out whence we have obtained the money; then, I hope, he will forgive my having taken this step without his permission. You must assist me in this matter, and take upon yourself the payment of the pensions and salaries; will you promise me to do so?"

Baron von Stein endeavored to reply, but the words died on his lips; he bowed over the hand the queen offered him, and tears fell on it as he pressed it to his lips.

"Oh," said the queen, "was I not right in saying that I should never lack ornaments? Are there any more precious than the sympathizing tears of a high-minded man?"

"Pardon me," whispered Baron von Stein. "I wish I could transmute them into diamonds, and lay them at the feet of my queen."

"And what," asked Louisa, "would they be worth compared with your noble and faithful heart? We can do without jewelry, but not without your services."

"Henceforth all my thought and energy shall be devoted to Prussia," said the minister. "But your majesty must be so kind as to assist me. I must implore you to unite with me to obtain from Napoleon less rigorous terms, and the withdrawal of the French troops."

"Alas! what can I do? You see I am ready to do any thing to lessen the sorrows of Prussia. Tell me, therefore, what I am to do."

"I have the honor to inform your majesty. I have drawn up a plan which will enable Prussia to pay this burdensome debt in the course of three years. It is true, we have to consent to large reductions, collect the war-debt due from Russia, negotiate loans, impose on the subjects of Prussia, besides the ordinary taxes, extraordinary contributions, and an income-tax, and issue paper money. These onerous expedients will deliver us at least from the present pressure by furnishing us the means of paying the French contributions. It is only necessary to send my plan to Paris—to deliver it safely into the hands of Napoleon, and induce him to accept it."

"I hope you will not ask me to go to Paris for this purpose!" exclaimed the queen, in dismay.

"No," answered Stein, "I have proposed to his majesty to intrust this task to his brother, Prince William. The king has approved my proposition, and sent for the prince to request him to undertake this difficult and dangerous mission."

"He will joyfully consent to do so," exclaimed Louisa. "He loves his king and his country, and will shrink from no sacrifice. Alas, he will have to endure many a humiliation, and in vain; it will lead to nothing."

"We must send powerful auxiliaries with him,"

said Stein, quickly. "And now I shall state the request which I desire to make to your majesty. You must support the prince, and help him in his difficult undertaking. I beseech you, therefore, to give him an autograph letter to Napoleon; condescend to entreat the emperor to be merciful and generous; depict to him the distress of your country, the sufferings of your subjects, and the privations of your family, and appeal to his magnanimity to desist from his demands, and accept our plan of payment. Oh, your majesty, in your enthusiasm and patriotic love, you are inspired with a power of expression which even Napoleon will be unable to resist; and whatever he would refuse to the prayers of the prince he will yield to those of Queen Louisa!"

"Never!" she exclaimed. "Never can I subject myself to this humiliation! Never can I stoop so low as to write to that man! Oh, you do not know how pitilessly he insulted me; otherwise you would not dare to ask me. Remember what I have already done, how low I have humbled myself, and all for nothing. Can I forget those days of Tilsit, when I seemed to live only for the purpose of heightening the conqueror's pride by my woe-begone appearance—when I felt as if chained in a triumphal car, and endeavored with a mournful smile to conceal my shame and misery, in order to meet him politely whose heartless glances made my soul tremble? How can I write to him whom I implored at Tilsit, but who carried his cruelty so far as to make promises which he afterward renounced—who designated as acts of gallantry the assurances he had given in reply to the tears of my motherly heart? If I could save Prussia, and secure the happiness of my husband and children, I would willingly suffer death, but this renewed humiliation is beyond my strength."

The minister, folding his arms, looked with deep emotion at the excited queen, as she rapidly walked up and down the apartment. Standing in front of him, she said in a gentle, imploring voice: "I am sure you feel that your request cannot possibly be granted."

"May I repeat to your majesty," said Stein, solemnly, "the words you uttered just now with regard to Prince William?—'The prince will joyfully consent to undertake the difficult mission. He loves his king and his country, and will shrink from no sacrifice.'"

The queen burst into tears, and, turning away from Stein, again but slowly paced the room, her head thrown back, her eyes turned upward with a suppliant expression, and her lips quivering.

"She is undergoing a terrible struggle," said Stein to himself, "but she will be victorious, for her heart is noble, and eternal love is in her and with her." He was not mistaken. Gradually she grew calmer; her eyes became more cheerful, and her features assumed a serene expression.

"Baron von Stein," she said, "I will do what you ask of me; I will conquer myself. As you believe it prudent, I will write to the Emperor Napoleon, and entreat him to spare Prussia. I desire you to draw up the letter for me, so that it may be only necessary to copy it."

"I foresaw this, and complied with it in advance," said the minister, taking out his memorandum-book, and presenting a sheet of paper. "Here," he said, "is a draught of the needed letter. If your majesty approve it, I venture to request you to copy it speedily, for this business must not be delayed, and if the prince accepts the propositions of the king, it would be advisable and necessary for him to set out to-day."

The queen hastily glanced over the letter. "It is all right," she said; "I approve all you have written. I wish to get through at once with this painful matter, and I request you to wait until I have copied it. You may take it with you, and lay it before the king."

She hastened to her desk, and wrote rapidly, but at times hesitating, as though her pen refused the humiliating words. But at last she finished, and having quickly read what she had written, she called Minister von Stein to her side. "Here," she said, sighing, and handing the paper to him, "take it, the sacrifice has been made. Will my people," she added, weeping, "will my children be hereafter grateful to me for having humbled myself for their sake? Will they ever think how painful must have been these sacrifices? Will they remember and thank me for them in happier days?"

"Your majesty," said Stein, enthusiastically, "never will they forget such devotion to your country; and when our great-grandchildren talk of these days of wretchedness, they will say: 'Prussia could be humiliated, but she could never perish; for Louisa was her good genius, praying, acting, and suffering for her.'"

"Well," whispered the queen, sadly, "my slumber in the grave will be sweet." Starting suddenly, she laid her hand on her heart. "Oh," she groaned, "how long before this troubled life of mine shall cease!—I will tell you something, Baron von Stein. Death is not far from me, and I feel that he comes nearer every day. There is no future for me on earth. But God's will be done! I read the other day somewhere, Sufferings and afflictions are blessings when they are

overcome.' Oh, how true that is! I myself say, in the midst of my afflictions that they are blessings! How much nearer I am to God!—how clear and true my ideas of the immortality of the soul! Seen through these tears, the solemn facts of the future come to me with resistless power. Adversity, if rightly used, does instruct and bless. I do not complain therefore that I have been called to weep." A low knocking at the door interrupted her, and the footman announced the arrival of Prince William.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

PRINCE WILLIAM.

The queen met her husband's brother with a pleasant smile, and offered him her hand. "I suppose, my brother, you come to bid me farewell?" she asked.

"I come to get from my noble sister the letter that I am to deliver to the Emperor Napoleon," said the prince, respectfully kissing the hand of his sister-in-law.

Lousia turned her eyes toward the minister. "The king knew, then, that you were to request me to write the letter?"

"Yes, but he forbade me to say that he deemed it necessary. It was to depend on your majesty's unbiassed judgment whether it should be written or not."

"You see, my sister," exclaimed the prince, "I had no doubt whatever as to your decision."

"Nor I that you would set out to-day," said Louisa, smiling.

"But will your majesty pardon me when I confess that I have not come merely for the letter, and to take leave of you?" asked the prince. "I heard from the king that Minister von Stein was with your majesty, and as I am going to set out to-night, and my time accordingly is very limited, I decided to have settled a little business affair with the minister."

"It affords me pleasure," said the queen.

"And you, minister," asked the prince, bowing to the baron, "will you grant me a brief audience to-day?"

"I shall immediately repair to the anteroom of your royal highness, and wait until you return," said Stein, approaching the door.

"Oh, no! pray, stay here," exclaimed the queen. "I offer this room to the prince as a *salle de conférences*, and shall retire into my cabinet."

The prince followed the queen, who was about to withdraw, and conducted her back to the sofa. "Pardon, my sister," he said, "I do not desire to confer with the minister about secrets that your majesty cannot hear. I only wish to ask a favor of his excellency, the minister of finance. You, doubtless, need a great deal of money at the present time, while my wife and I are spending much less than heretofore, because we are living here in very humble style. We have made our calculations, and ascertained that we are able to do with two-thirds of our income. Accordingly, I request you to accede to my resolution that, until times are better, I give up one-third, and beg you to pay this amount into the state treasury."

"Ah, my brother," replied the queen, "you are worthy of being the brother of the best of kings, for you vie with him in every virtue. Prussia cannot be crushed so long as such princes stand by her side."

"And so long as she is protected by such a queen," said the prince, kissing the offered hand of his sister-in-law. He then turned again to the minister. "Your excellency," he said, "I am commissioned to reveal the same resolution to you in the name of my brother. Prince Henry also gives one-third of his income, and requests the minister of finance to pay this amount into the state treasury. Is this verbal declaration sufficient, or will it be necessary for us to repeat it in writing?"

"It will be necessary for your royal highness, as well as for Prince Henry, to make a written declaration to this effect, and hand it to the minister of state. It will then be deposited in the archives of the royal house, and will one day be a splendid monument of your patriotism."

"In that case, a declaration in writing being required, I request you to be so kind as to accompany me to my house. We will settle the matter at once, and invite Prince Henry to participate in the transaction. Can you spare us fifteen minutes, and will you accept a seat in my carriage?"

"I am at the service of your royal highness," said Stein, bowing.

"Then I beg my sister to dismiss us," said the prince, approaching the queen. "I have many things yet to attend to, so that every minute is precious, and, above all, I have to inform my wife of my speedy departure. Let me beg you, my sister, to be a faithful friend of Marianne in my absence; take my beloved wife under your protection, and, when she is afflicted, permit her to be near you."

"We shall weep together, my brother," said the queen, deeply moved. "All of us will miss you, and it will seem as though life had become

PRINCE WILLIAM AND QUEEN LOUISA.

drearier when you are absent. But, considering your generous resolution, it does not behoove me to complain of our fate. Joyfully, as you have done, we shall submit to it. I entertain the firm belief that there are better days for Prussia. Go, my brother, and assist in hastening them by word and deed. God will protect you, and the love of your wife, and of your brothers and sisters, will accompany you! Farewell!" She waved her hand, and turned away to conceal her tears.

The prince withdrew in silence, followed by the minister. The queen heard the door close after him, and, raising her arms toward heaven, exclaimed in a fervent tone: "My God, protect Prussia! Oh, bless our country and our people!" She stood thus praying, with uplifted arms.

After a pause, she murmured, "Now it is time to attend to my business with the jeweller. The king is in his cabinet, and never comes at this hour." Having rung the bell, she ordered the footman to request the court-jeweller to call at once on the queen. Going to her dressing-room, she took from the table a large leathern box containing all her jewelry. She succeeded with difficulty in carrying the heavy box into the reception-room, but she thought, smilingly: "The heavier it is, the better." Opening the caskets, the brilliant ornaments gladdened her more than they had ever done. The table was covered with them, and she contemplated their beauty and value. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "I did not know that I was so rich. These precious stones will certainly bring money enough to pay all arrears, and there will be something over for my children."

At this moment the door of the anteroom opened, and the footman announced Mr. Marcus, the court-jeweller. The queen ordered him to be admitted, adding, that no one else was to be announced while he was present. She then locked the opposite door leading into the small corridor, and thence to the rooms of the king. In the mean time the jeweller had entered; he remained respectfully at the door, and waited for the queen to accost him.

"Mr. Marcus," said Louisa, gracefully acknowledging his bow, "I sent for you to confer about my jewelry. I should like to make some changes in it; and then, as we cannot tell whither these stormy times may drive us or our property, I wish to make an invoice of these articles, and ascertain their cash value. Please step to the table, and be kind enough to tell me how much all this is worth."

Mr. Marcus approached and carefully examined the magnificent array before him. "These are real treasures, your majesty," he said, admiringly; "several pieces among them are exceedingly rich."

"Yes," exclaimed the queen, "I suppose one could get a great deal of money for them?"

"Your majesty," said Mr. Marcus, shrugging his shoulders, "it needs much money—in fact, an enormous fortune, to buy them. Part of their value consists in their artistic setting."

"Ah, I understand; you mean to say that, if they were to be sold now, one would not get as much as was paid for them."

"Not half as much, your majesty! The intrinsic value is very different from the cost, which depends much on the setting."

"Pray tell me, then, their intrinsic value."

"Your majesty, to do so correctly, it would be necessary for me to examine every piece."

"Do so, Mr. Marcus. I will take my memorandum-book and enter each one, affixing the price. Afterward we can ascertain the whole amount."

The jeweller looked in surprise at the queen; she apparently did not notice it, but pointed with the lead-pencil, which she had in her hand, at one of the caskets. "There is my large diamond necklace; what do you think that is worth, sir?"

The jeweller took up the necklace, twinkling as a cluster of stars. "These diamonds are magnificent," he said; "they are only a little yellow, and here and there is a slight defect. I think, however, that the stones, without the setting, are worth five thousand dollars."

"Five thousand dollars," wrote the queen. "Now, the necklace of rubies and diamonds."

"These Turkish rubies belong to that very rare kind to be met with only in royal treasuries," said the jeweller. "They are antique, and look like sparkling blood. Their value is immense, your majesty; only a connoisseur would be able to appreciate them, and it is difficult to appraise them but by the standard value of other Turkish rubies. A jeweller might, however, receive twice as much as I name—four thousand dollars, according to the ordinary standard."

"Four thousand dollars," wrote the queen; "now, the next."

"Here," he said, "is a complete set of the most beautiful round pearls: a diadem, a necklace, earrings, and bracelets," taking up a large case which had not been opened, and raising its lid.

"No," said the queen, blushing, "we will not appraise these pearls. I have inherited them from my lamented mother, and they are therefore of

priceless value to me." She extended her hand and laid the casket on the table at her side. "Now tell me the value of the other articles; take that necklace of Indian emeralds—"

Half an hour afterward the list was completed. "Thirty thousand dollars," said the queen; "that, then, is the full value of my jewelry?"

"Yes, your majesty, but its cost must have been several hundred thousand dollars. I have stated only the imperishable value of the stones; it is impossible to appraise the setting."

"Well, just now I care only for the cash equivalent," said the queen, quickly. "And now, sir, listen to me. "When I was requested to procure you the appointment of jeweller to the court, I made inquiries concerning your character, and heard nothing but the most flattering opinions. You are known as an honorable man in whom all may repose confidence. I will prove to you the high value I attach to public opinion, and I rely on you to keep secret what I am about to tell you."

"I swear by all that is sacred that what your majesty is gracious enough to reveal shall remain buried in my heart as a precious gem in the depths of the sea."

"I believe you," said the queen. "I want to sell all these diamonds, emeralds, and rubies—every thing, except my pearls."

"Sell them!" exclaimed Mr. Marcus, starting back and turning pale. "Oh, no, pardon me, your majesty, I have misunderstood you. My hearing is a little impaired. I beg pardon for my mistake, and request your majesty to be kind enough to repeat your orders."

"You did not mistake my words," said the queen, kindly. "I do want to sell them."

"Has it come to this," said the jeweller, sighing, "that our noble and beautiful queen is unwilling to wear again her accustomed ornaments; and that she considers it no longer worth while to be seen by her poor, unhappy people in the splendor of a queen?" Sobs choked his voice, and, unable to repress his tears, he turned away and covered his face with his hands.

"It has come to that, sir, that the queen will also take part in the privations of her country; that she will have no other diamonds than the grateful tears of her loyal people, and that she believes herself sufficiently adorned when at the side of her husband, and surrounded by her children. I thank you for your sympathy, for they prove your honest disposition toward me. But believe me, I need no pity. If every good man has peace in his own heart, he will have cause to rejoice. And now, sir, let us talk calmly about this matter."

"I am ready to receive the orders of your majesty," said Mr. Marcus, making an effort to regain his composure, "and entreat my august queen to forgive me that my feelings overcame me in her presence. But now I must examine the jewels more carefully than before. Believing that they were merely to be invoiced without reference to their sale, I stated only their lowest value. I am sure better prices might be obtained for them, and, besides, it remains for me to ascertain the value of the gold setting by weighing it."

"Oh, no," said the queen, smiling. "Let us not enter into such minute details. Besides, the purchaser ought to have something for his trouble, and for the risk of being unable to sell again. We will, therefore, let your first appraisement stand as it is. The question is, whether you know of any one who is willing to pay so large a sum in cash."

The jeweller reflected a moment. "Well," he said, "I know an opportunity to dispose of them immediately. If your majesty permits me to do so, I will purchase them myself. The Emperor Alexander of Russia, during his late sojourn at this place, gave me a large order in reference to a wedding-gift for the betrothed of the Grand-duke Constantine. I have received bills of exchange, drawn on the wealthiest banking-houses of St. Petersburg, and the emperor has authorized me to send in at once precious stones to the amount of fifty thousand dollars. I am able to pay you half the appraised value to-day, and for the other half I will give you bills, drawn on St. Petersburg bankers, payable in two weeks. But I repeat to your majesty that I have appraised the stones at a very low rate, and that I shall make large profits, and realize at least four thousand dollars. Your majesty ought to permit me to add the value of the setting."

"I told you already that we ought not to add any thing to the first appraisement. Well, the bargain is made," said the queen, gently. "Bring me the money and the bills of exchange, and you may then take the jewelry. Let us say I have intrusted it to you to make some alterations in it."

An hour afterward, the caskets disappeared from the queen's table; in their place stood a box filled with rolls of gold-pieces, and the bills of exchange lay at its side. The queen, placing a few of the rolls in her desk and the bills in the box, hastened to write the following letter to Baron von Stein:

"I request you to grant me the same favor which the prince obtained from you. I desire likewise to pay some savings into the state

treasury, and send you, therefore, twenty-five thousand dollars with this letter. Pray do not forget to pay, in accordance with our agreement, the arrears of salaries due the men of science and art, and the faithful old servants of the king.

"LOUISA."

"Oh," said the queen, laying aside the pen, and looking up with a grateful expression, "how many worthy men will be delivered from distress by this unexpected payment! What fervent prayers for their king will ascend to heaven! Merciful God, hear them, and let my husband and children be again happy; then I shall have nothing more to desire on earth!"

In the evening of the same day Prince William, accompanied only by an adjutant and a footman, set out for Paris in order to deliver to the Emperor Napoleon the financial plan drawn up by Minister von Stein, and the letter of Queen Louisa, and to try to induce Napoleon by verbal remonstrances to withdraw his demands, and accept less ruinous conditions. Before entering his travelling-coach, the prince, in his cabinet, bade farewell to her whom he loved so passionately. They remained long without uttering a word or even a sigh. The beautiful face of the Princess Marianne was pale, but her tearless eyes beamed with hope. "Go, my beloved husband," she said, disengaging herself at last from the arms of the prince, "go and perform your noble sacrifice! My love will accompany you. Your life is my life, and your death my death! Go! I fear nothing."

"But at this solemn hour I must communicate a secret to you, Marianne," said the prince, "and ask your consent to a resolution that I have taken. Should all my efforts be of no avail—should Napoleon be induced neither by Stein's plan nor by the queen's letter, nor by my own solicitations, to consent to the proposed mode of liquidation, owing to his belief that he would not have sufficient security for the payment of the contributions, then, Marianne, a last remedy would remain, and I would assuredly not shrink from it. In that case I shall offer myself as a hostage. I shall tell him that I must remain his prisoner, and allow myself to be transported to If, to Cayenne, or where he pleases, until the king has made all the promised payments. This will prove to him that I myself feel convinced that these will be made. He may be sure the king's brother will be redeemed. Tell me now, Marianne, do you approve my resolution?"

The princess laid her hand on the head of her husband. "You offer to surrender not only yourself but both of us," she said. "Both of us, William, for I want to be where you are. I will also share your devotion to Prussia. You may offer both of us as hostages to the emperor. I shall be happy when with you, whether in a dungeon or in a palace. The love uniting us will sustain us even then, and, when our captivity is over, we will return happy to our beloved country. But if it be otherwise—if circumstances occur delaying the payments, and calling down upon you the wrath of the conqueror—if he then desire to take revenge upon you—oh, then, I shall know how to find a way to his heart so that he will permit me to die with you. We are alone; our children are dead, and, therefore, we are at liberty to pursue such a course. Oh, William, then we shall be happy forever! Go, my beloved husband! and when the hour comes, call me to your side. Let us live, and, if need be, die for the fatherland! Let it be inscribed on our coffin: 'They have done their duty. The fatherland is content with them!'" *

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE GENIUS OF PRUSSIA.

THE queen was alone in her room. She sat on the sofa, and a dress of heavy silk, interwoven with flowers, lay spread out on the table before her. She turned over the dress, as if carefully examining it. "Sure enough, there it is!" she suddenly exclaimed. "Now, quick to work!" She hastened to her table, on which was to be seen a beautiful silk embroidery just finished by the queen. Among the threads she selected one that was of the same color as the dress, and hastily threaded her needle. "Now I will finish my work before any one surprises me," whispered Louisa.

* Prince William really carried out this resolution. He found at his first interview that Napoleon was by no means friendly toward Prussia, and particularly toward King Frederick William. Carried away by his enthusiasm and generosity, the prince took at this audience the step which he had intended to reserve if all else should prove unavailing. He offered himself and his wife as hostages to the emperor, and entreated him to permit them to remain in French captivity until the payments were made. Napoleon listened to him, and while he was speaking the countenance of the emperor gradually became milder. He approached the prince, embraced him affectionately, and exclaimed, "That is very generous, but it is impossible. Never would I accept such a sacrifice—never!" For the rest, the mission of the prince was an utter failure. Napoleon referred him to Minister Champagny, who, by all sorts of subterfuges, managed to protract and finally to break off the negotiations. The prince was detained several months in Paris, and returned, without having accomplished any thing, to Königsberg, whither the royal family had removed in the mean time.

She was so assiduously employed that she did not notice that the opposite door, softly opening, had admitted the king. He stood still for a moment and looked at the queen. Advancing, he asked, frowningly, "What are you doing, Louisa?"

The queen uttered a cry, and a deep blush suffused her cheeks. Pushing aside the table and the dress, she rose from the sofa and went to salute her husband. "Welcome, dearest!" she said, lovingly clinging to him; "you knew that it was cold and lonely here, and you come to gladden me. Thanks, my Frederick, thanks and welcome! I feel as though you were given to me anew, and I greet you every morning as with the young heart of a bride." She laid her beautiful head on his shoulder, and her delicate hand played with his hair.

But the king did not return her caresses, and his eyes, which usually looked so lovingly at his wife, were directed to the dress on the table. "You have not yet replied to me, Louisa," he exclaimed.

"Replied to what?" she asked, raising her head from his shoulder, and calmly looking at him.

"You know it," said the king—"to my question."

"To your question? And what did you ask?" replied the queen. "You asked me whether I loved you and had already thought of you this morning. Yes, my king and husband, you are the object of all my thoughts, and I think of you with every pulsation of my heart. And do you know what just occurred to me, and what I am going to propose to you? It is a fine winter-day, and the snow is sparkling in the sun. We have half an hour until dinner. Let us improve it and take a walk. Let us go to our two princes, who are skating with their instructor. Tell me, my friend, shall we do so?"

The king shook his head gloomily. "You wish to divert me from my question," he said, "which proves that you have heard it. I will repeat it. What were you doing with that dress when I entered?"

The queen hung her head in evident embarrassment, and her face assumed a melancholy air. "You insist on a reply, my husband?" she asked. "I hoped you would notice my confusion, and generously desist."

"I must know every thing that happens to you," said the king; "I must know the full extent of our misfortunes, that I may not be deceived by any illusions. Tell me, therefore, what were you doing?"

"Well, then, my husband, I will tell you," said the queen, resolutely. "I like the dress, not because it is made of very costly and beautiful materials, but you yourself selected it for me. You know that we give a party to-morrow to celebrate the birthday of the crown prince, and I wished to wear that dress. Now, I knew what no one else knew, that the last time I wore it I had torn it by a nail in the wall, on crossing the corridor. If I had informed my maid of this mishap, I should have been unable to wear it again, for custom, I believe, forbids queens to wear mended dresses. I was, however, bent on saving it. For this purpose I took it stealthily from my wardrobe to mend the small hole as rapidly as possible, while my lady of honor was taking a ride, and my maid was at dinner. I had just finished when you entered, and if you had come a few minutes latter the dress would have disappeared, and no one would suspect to-morrow that my rich attire had been mended. Now, you know my secret, and I entreat you to keep it and allude to it no more. But you must also reply to me: shall we take a walk?"

The king made no answer, but gazed at her with melancholy tenderness. "You do this, Louisa, because you shrink from the expense of buying a new dress," he said. "Oh, do not deny it; do not try to deceive me. I know it to be true."

"And suppose it were true?" asked the queen, gently, drawing her head from his hands. "Will you be sad because I do in these times what all our subjects are obliged to do—because I try to be a little economical?"

"The Queen of Prussia, my consort," exclaimed the king, "is compelled to mend her own dresses! Is the cup of disgrace and humiliation not yet full!"

"And why do you speak of disgrace?" asked the queen, laying her hands on the shoulders of her husband, and looking tenderly in his face. "Why do you say I humble myself by mending my dress? I only followed the example of your noble ancestor, Frederick II. Did not the great king also mend and patch his clothes? Did he not repair with sealing-wax his scabbard, because he did not want to buy a new one? Well, I believe little Louisa will be allowed to do as the great Frederick did, and need not be ashamed of it. On the contrary, my husband, when I sat there sewing, my heart was glad, for the memories of my early years revived in my mind: I saw myself at the side of my venerable grandmother, the Landgravine of Hesse-Darmstadt, and I lived again in those sunny days that I spent with her in Hanover. My grandmother taught me how to mend, and I frequently profited

by the skill I had acquired with her. For you married the daughter of a poor prince, who was not a sovereign at that time, but only a younger brother, and the Queen of Prussia does not blush to confess that when she was yet a princess of Mecklenburg, she not only mended her dresses but even trimmed her shoes with her own hands. It is no jest, my king and husband, I really often did so, and I never felt humiliated. Never did I consider it a disgrace to do sometimes what thousands of the most virtuous and amiable women are always doing. When I used to sew my shoes, I was poor, for I did not yet know you; but now, although I have repaired my dress, I am rich, for I have you—I have my children—I am the wife of a man who suffers because he values his honor higher than worldly greatness—who would perish rather than break an alliance he has sworn to, and refuses to give his neck to the tyrant's yoke. Oh, my husband, when I look at you, my soul is transported with gladness, and I thank God that I am allowed to love you. Since you are mine I feel happy, rich, and powerful."

She placed her beautiful arms around the king, who pressed her against his breast. "Thanks, my Louisa! thanks for your joyful love. Your eyes gladden my life, and your voice is the only music that can lull my grief. That is the reason I come to you now. I seek here consolation in my affliction, for when you help me to bear the burden, it is less oppressive. I have received two letters to-day which gave me pain, and which I desire to communicate to you."

"I shall be grateful to you, my husband, for doing so," said the queen. "Come, let us sit down together, and communicate the letters to me. Who wrote them? Whence did they come?"

"One is from Königsberg, from our daughter Charlotte."

"From Charlotte!" exclaimed the queen, starting. "Has any thing happened to her? Has she been taken ill?"

"No, she is well, and nothing has happened to her. She is, on the contrary, in excellent spirits, and, like all young girls, wishes to dress well. She writes to me, asking me to send her money that she may renew her winter wardrobe. Here is the letter."

The queen quickly glanced over it. "Oh, the dear, good child," she exclaimed, "how tenderly she loves us—how prettily and affectionately she gives expression to her feelings! And yet she often appears outwardly cold and indifferent.—She resembles her noble father: she does not bear her heart on her tongue, but it throbs lovingly in her bosom. She is seemingly reserved and haughty, but she is affectionate. If God permits her to live I anticipate a brilliant future for her." *

"A brilliant future!" echoed the king; "for *my* daughter—for the daughter of a king without a kingdom—of a man who is so poor as to be unable to gratify her just and modest wishes! She asks for money to replenish her winter wardrobe. Now, do you know what I have written to her? I have sent her five dollars, and given her at the same time the wretched consolation to be content with that sum, for it was all I could spare."

"Well," said the queen, with a gentle smile, "at all events, five dollars will enable her to buy a warm winter dress, and by and by our finances will improve."

"I do not see any such prospect," exclaimed the king, vehemently. "All our resources are exhausted; all the public funds are gone, and even your generosity will be unable to create new ones. My noble queen, in generous self-denial, sacrifices her jewels in order to gladden and comfort others, and to lay her own contribution on the altar of her country. She did not think of herself in doing so."

"Yes, I did," said the queen, smiling, "I did think of myself. I reserved five thousand dollars, and with that sum all the bills we owed—all our debts for the household, for the stable, and the servants, have been paid. But you intended communicating two letters to me. What about the second?"

"The second," said the king, mournfully, "is a farewell from my faithful subjects in the province of Mark, whom, alas! with a heavy heart, I have absolved from their oath of allegiance, and ordered to serve another sovereign, and to obey the new King of Westphalia. I am not ashamed of confessing it, Louisa, I wept on writing to them, and on reading their reply. There it is. Read it aloud. It will do me good to hear again these touching words."

The queen unfolded the large letter, to which several official seals were attached, and read in a tremulous voice:

"Our heart was rent when we read your farewell letter, good king. We cannot believe even now that we, who always loved you so affectionately, are to cease being your subjects. As sure as we live, it was neither your fault, nor ours,

* The very words of the queen.—Vide "Queen Louisa," p. 302. This prophecy was fulfilled, for the Princess Charlotte afterward married the Emperor of Russia.

that your generals and ministers were too confused after the defeat of Jena to march the dispersed divisions of the army to us, and to lead them, united with our whole people, into a struggle which, with the blessing of God, would have been successful. We would have willingly risked our lives, for you must not doubt that the blood of the ancient Cheruscians is still flowing in our veins; that we are proud of calling Hermann and Wittekind countrymen of ours, and of knowing that on our soil was that field of battle where our ancestors defeated their enemies in so decisive a manner that they never fought again. We also would assuredly have saved the fatherland, for we have, we believe, marrow in our bones, and remain uncorrupted by modern luxury and effeminacy. But no one can escape the decrees of Providence. Oh, farewell, then, our father and king! Heaven grant you more faithful generals and more sagacious ministers for the remainder of your states! You are not omniscient, and you were sometimes obliged to follow them into blind paths. Unfortunately, we must also submit to what cannot be helped. God help us! We trust our new sovereign will be a father to us, and honor and respect our language and customs, our faith and rights, as you always did, dear and beloved king! Health, joy, and peace!"

"And you call us poor and disgraced when such hearts are throbbing for us," exclaimed the queen, with radiant eyes. "No, we are rich, for our subjects love us, and even when compelled to part with you, they send you their love-greetings!"

"But I cannot reward their love; I have no means of showing how my heart appreciates it," exclaimed the king, mournfully. "Oh, Louisa, I am a poor, wretched man; my heart is desponding, and even your cheering words are unable to console it. Wherever I look, whatever plans I form, I see nowhere a prospect of change for the better. My country is occupied by hordes of foreign soldiers. My subjects, exposed to the overbearing and avarice of the French, who think they are sovereign rulers of my states, are vainly praying to their king to come to their assistance. Their courage is exhausted; their strength gone; commerce is prostrated; manufacturers and mechanics are idle; the farmers have no seed-corn, nor courage to cultivate their fields, for they know that they will be robbed of the fruits of their labor. Our soldiers walk about with bowed heads, and scarcely dare to wear their uniforms, for they remind them of Jena and Auerstadt, of the capitulation of Prenzlau, of the surrender of so many fortresses, and, like myself, they wish they had been buried on the battle-field of Jena. Want, misery, and suffering are everywhere, and I am unable to help! I must still permit the enemy to inundate my states, although it was expressly stipulated by the treaty of Tilsit that the French army was to evacuate Prussia in the course of two months. I must also permit the Emperor Napoleon (though after the conclusion of peace, and contrary to the treaty) to take New Silesia, and add her to the kingdom of Warsaw; to transform the two leagues of the new territory of Dantzic into two German miles, and, without even asking my consent, to deprive me of my property. But I am determined to suffer this injustice and humiliation no longer, and to make the last sacrifice."

"What are you going to do, my husband?" exclaimed the queen, laying her hand with an anxious gesture on the arm of her husband. "What sacrifice?"

"Myself!" said the king, gloomily, "for it is I alone who bring misfortune on my people. A sinister fatality pursues me, and has pursued me from my earliest youth. Only one star ever rose on my troubled firmament, and that was you, Louisa. But it will not set, even though I carry out my purpose. In solitude and sorrow it will still shine hopefully upon me. My childhood was wretched, and embittered by long-continued sufferings; while I was crown prince, I had to submit to the affliction of not possessing the heart of my father, and of being unable to approve his actions. I was so unfortunate as to be compelled to begin the first day of my reign with a demonstration against his course by having the woman arrested whom he had loved so long and ardently, and to whom the final wishes and thoughts of the dying sovereign had been devoted. It is his spirit, perhaps, that now brings all these calamities upon me. But my people shall not suffer; I will deliver them from the fatal influences attaching them to me, and in order to conciliate my fate I will voluntarily lay down my crown."

"Never! my husband, never shall you do so," exclaimed the queen in great excitement. "Never shall my noble and brave king declare that his spirit is crushed and vanquished. Majesty would thereby render itself guilty of suicide. For majesty, like life, is a boon sent by Providence, and you are no more allowed to divest yourself of it arbitrarily than to put a voluntary end to your life. And, least of all, are you permitted to do so in times of adversity and danger, for such a course would look like cowardice with

which my king and husband assuredly cannot be charged. Charles V. and Christina of Sweden were at liberty to abdicate, for when they did so they were at the acme of their power, and yet they ever repented of it; they felt that all nations were scornfully exclaiming: 'Behold the faithless, suicidal servant of God! Behold the stigma on that anointed brow! The crown sanctifies the head that wears it. But that coward has dishonored himself, and the glory that God gave him.' Oh, my beloved husband, the nations must never speak in this manner of you; the annals of history must never report that you deserted your people when they were oppressed, and that, in order to obtain peace and safety for yourself, you gave up your country, and cast away your crown. It is true, fortune is imposing grievous burdens on us; but at such a time it behooves a true man to meet adversity with a bold front."

"Ah, if I were possessed of your unwavering faith and cheerfulness!" said the king, profoundly sighing. "But my hope is gone; our misfortunes have crushed out not my courage but my belief in a better future."

"And yet they were necessary that we might one day obtain real happiness," said Louisa. "Oh, I begin to perceive distinctly that the events which have afflicted us will redound to our own welfare. Providence is evidently introducing a new era, because the old one has outlived itself. We fell asleep on the laurels of Frederick the Great, who was the master-spirit of another century; we did not progress with the times, and they outstripped us."

"There must be many changes, I am satisfied, in our administration," said the king, thoughtfully. "The army must be reorganized, and those who in the hour of danger are cowards must be judged with inexorable severity. Alas! all this will be in vain; I succeed in accomplishing nothing; all my measures turn out to my detriment, and to the advantage of our enemy."

"It is true," said the queen, sighing, "he has much success. Even our most deliberate plans are fruitless. Though the Russians and Prussians fight like lions, and are not defeated, they are obliged to evacuate the field of battle, and the French emperor claims a victory. Nevertheless, it would be blasphemous to say that God was on his side; he is an instrument of Providence in order to bury that in which life is extinct, but which still clings to that destined to live. We may derive lessons from him, and what he has accomplished ought not to be lost to us. Oh, I firmly believe in Providence, and a great moral system ruling the world. I cannot see it, however, in the brutal reign of force, and hence I believe that these times will be succeeded by more prosperous ones. All good men hope for them, and the eulogists of the hero of this day must not mislead us. All that has happened is not the ultimate order of things; it is a severe yet salutary preparation for a new and better destiny. We must not delude ourselves, my beloved friend, with the idea that this is remote; in spite of all obstacles, we must strive to reach it with strength, courage, and cheerfulness. With the merciful assistance of Providence, we must continue to battle for our honor and our rights!"

"Yes, be it so!" exclaimed the king, "God is with me, for He has placed you at my side; He has given me an angel who fills my heart with that courage which is based on faith in Him. Oh, forgive my timidity and despondency; I pledge you my word I will meet the future with a strong heart. Only remain with me, my dearest Louisa; look at me with your cheering eyes, and inspire my heart with hope. Whenever I falter, remind me of this hour in which I vowed to you to struggle to the last."

"Thanks, my king and husband!" exclaimed the queen; "whatever may happen, let us meet it, united in love, hope, and faith in God!"

"Yes," said the king; "adversity itself is not devoid of exalted moments, and you, my Louisa, have become dearer to me in these days. I know now by experience what a treasure you are to me. Let the storm rage outside, if all is calm within."

"It is my pride and happiness to possess the love of the best of men," said the queen; "and though we leave no inheritance to our children, we shall leave them at least the example of our wedded life; let them learn from it to be happy in themselves."

"*Madame la Reine est servie!*" shouted a merry voice behind them; and when the queen turned, she saw her son, Crown-Prince Frederick William, who approached her with rosy cheeks and laughing eyes. "Pardon me, dearest parents, for venturing to enter the room without your permission, but I longed to salute you, and therefore assumed the duty of the steward, who was about to announce that dinner is ready."

"And I suppose my son found this announcement exceedingly interesting, and longed just as much for his dinner as for his parents," exclaimed the queen, smiling and looking with beaming eyes at her favorite son.

"Oh, no, no," said the crown prince, laughing, "I thought first of my beloved parents, but then —yes, I confess the idea of getting my dinner is

very agreeable, considering that I have been on the ice for several hours."

"Well, my husband," asked the queen, merrily, "shall we comply with the wishes of the young epicure? Shall we permit him to conduct us to the dining-room?"

"Yes, certainly," said the king, offering his arm to his wife. "Lead the way, M. Steward!" The crown prince assumed a grave air, and, after bowing to his parents in the reverential manner of a royal steward, he preceded them with ludicrous strides, and commenced singing in a ringing voice: "*Immer langsam voran, dass die oesterreichsche landwehr nachkommen kann.*" *

The king laughed more heartily than he had done for many weeks, while the queen looked lovingly at her son who had performed this miracle.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A FAMILY DINNER.

In the dining-room was William, the younger prince, who hastened to his parents, and returned the tender salutation of his beautiful mother by covering her hand with kisses. There were no guests at the royal table; the king preferred to dine *en famille*, and for several days the queen had ordered the ladies and gentlemen of the court to dine by themselves, and only with the royal family when company was not distasteful to her husband. The king looked with a smile of content at the small table, on which he noticed only four covers, and, conducting his wife to her seat, he said, with a grateful glance, "You have anticipated my most secret wishes, Louisa; I like, above all, to dine alone with my family. Guests and strange faces always bring etiquette with them, and that renders our repasts formal and unpleasant. Thanks, Louisa!"

It was a very frugal meal, hardly suitable to a royal dinner-table. Frederick William and the queen, however, contentedly partook of the plain, wholesome food; and, gayly chatting, they did not seem to notice that the dinner was served up in common china dishes, and that the plates before them were of the same cheap material. Prince William ate with the appetite of a healthy little boy; the crown prince, however, who was twelve years old, did not seem to relish his food. He had disposed of his soup, although he thought it weak and not well flavored, supposing the other courses would be more to his taste. But when it was succeeded by roast meat and cabbage, he made a wry face, and handled his fork very daintily.

"I suppose you do not like cabbage?" asked the king, who had noticed the reluctant appetite of the crown prince.

"No, your majesty," said the prince, smiling, "there are dishes that I like better, although I know it to be a very respectable one, with which the French just now are made acquainted. I will leave the *shucrout* * to them, and console myself in the mean time with thinking of two things—of the entremets now, and of my birthday to-morrow."

"I suppose you entertain a good many wishes in regard to your birthday?" asked the king, putting more cabbage on his own plate. "Tell me, Fred, what is it you wish?"

"Above all, that my gracious father and my dear mother may continue to love me," said the crown prince, glancing at the queen, who nodded to him. "But, besides, I have a few other wishes. In the first place, I would like to have a nice horse with handsome new saddle and bridle, and I would like to be allowed to take frequent rides with my parents, but always at a gallop—at a full gallop!"

"But, Fred, that would be bad for you, considering that you are not yet a skilful horseman," exclaimed the queen, laughing.

"Well, then," said the prince, gravely, "I wish for another birthday present, that I may become a skilful horseman without learning, for that is a very unpleasant and slow affair, as I found it out again to-day, when, in skating, I wanted to imitate my teacher in describing a circle on the ice, and only succeeded in falling on my nose!"

"Every thing in the world has to be learned," said the king, "and although you may at first fall, you learn thereby to stand the firmer afterward, and to keep your head erect. But have you told us all your birthday wishes, or are there any more?"

"Oh, there are a great many yet, your majesty," exclaimed the prince, laughing. "If I could sow all my great and small wishes, like the dragon's teeth of Cadmus, I would be at the head of a very pretty regiment of soldiers to-morrow."

"It is strange how many desires young folks have nowadays," said the king, thoughtfully. "That boy, although he is but twelve years old, wishes to have a saddle-horse as a birthday present, and in times so hard as these! When I was

* "Always slowly forward, that the Austrian landwehr may be able to follow"—a well-known humorous song, ridiculing the slowness of the Austrian militia.

* French pronunciation of sour-crout.

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as old as you, there were golden times in Prussia, and yet I did not receive many presents on my birthday. Sometimes I had to be content with nothing but a small flower-pot, worth a few shillings, and if my instructor wished to be particularly kind to me he took me to a public garden, and treated me to one, or, at the best, two silver groschens' worth of cherries."

"Oh," said the queen, with tearful eyes, "it makes my heart ache when I think of the cheerless youth of your good and noble father, and of the sufferings he had to undergo under his harsh instructor."

"It is true, Counsellor Benisch was a rigorous and harsh man," said the king; "he treated me very roughly, often wreaked his ill-humor upon me, and thought he ought to rob me entirely of my youthful pleasures. He did not do so because he was a bad man, but because he believed it to be the best system of education. And then it produced good fruits. I learned early to bear disagreeable things, and uncomplainingly to do without agreeable ones; thus I succeeded in submitting to a great deal that seemed intolerably burdensome to others. When I was a boy, it was a holiday for me, for instance, when the entremets at dinner consisted of omelet, while I see that our Prince Fred is no better satisfied with that than with the cabbage."

"Your majesty is right; I do not like either," said the crown prince, "and it was in vain that I consoled myself with the hope that there was something more to my taste."

"What?" exclaimed the queen, smiling. "You do not like omelet? If you are a true son of mine, it must become a favorite dish, for when I was your age, I greatly liked it; and if you will now eat a good plate of it, I will tell you a story about omelet and salad."

"Oh, mamma, just see, I have liberally supplied my plate; I am, therefore, entitled to the story," exclaimed the crown prince.

"I will tell the story if the king will permit me," said the queen, looking at her husband.

"The king requests you to do so," said Frederick William, nodding pleasantly. "I wish to hear your story, Louisa; you always know new and very pretty ones; your memory is really a little treasury!"

"It is not a very interesting story, after all," said the queen, thoughtfully, "except to myself as a youthful reminiscence.—I had gone with my father and my brother George to Frankfort-on-the-Main to witness the coronation of the Emperor Leopold. I remember but little of the festivities, for at that time I was only fourteen years old, and the pompous ceremonies, together with the deafening shouts of the populace (who cheered the roast ox, larded with rabbits, no less enthusiastically than the German emperor), were indescribably tedious to me."

"Dear mamma," exclaimed the crown prince, "possibly the people may have taken the roast ox for the German emperor."

"Possibly my witty son may be right," said the queen, "and the people may have rejoiced in so boisterous a manner because they were better pleased with the roast ox than with the emperor himself. The ceremonies lasted too long for me, and as all eyes were fixed on the emperor, and no one paid any attention to the daughter of a younger son of Mecklenburg, I softly slipped from the gallery of the princes, beckoned to my sister Frederica, and, followed by our governess, dear Madame Gelieux, we left the Roemer, and entered our carriage, which made but slow headway through the dense crowd, but finally conveyed us to a more quiet street. We intended to do homage to some one else—to pay our respects to the king of literature. We desired to make a pilgrimage to the place where the greatest poet of Germany was born, and visit the dear lady his mother, Mde. Counsellor Goethe.

"Our heart was transported with gladness when the carriage halted in front of the door, and a handsome face, with dark, brilliant eyes, appeared at the window, and nodded to us very cordially. We were old friends and acquaintances, and, therefore, did not beg leave to enter, but hastened directly into the sitting-room. Madame Goethe met us with a kind salutation, and made a sign to the servant-girl to remove the table standing in the middle of the room. But we saw that the dish was still filled, and that Madame Goethe, after returning from the coronation, was about to take dinner.

"'Madame Goethe,' we exclaimed, 'if you do not have your dinner immediately served up, we shall leave at once, and will never believe again that you are our friend, and that we are your children, as you always call us. If you will eat, and permit us to be present, we will remain; but if you persist in receiving us ceremoniously as princesses, and in having the dinner removed, we must go.' 'Good heavens,' exclaimed the good lady, in surprise, 'I will comply with the wishes of the little princesses, and eat if they insist on it. I am only ashamed of my dinner to-day, for I have permitted the cook to go to the coronation, and she has not yet returned. The chambermaid, therefore, prepared some food for me; it is so plain, however, that I cannot invite you

to partake of it.'—'Oh, we do not want to eat, but only to sit with you,' exclaimed Frederica and I; we then took the arms of the old lady and conducted her to the table. She sighed, but yielded to our solicitations. We sat down opposite her, and Madame Gelieux took a seat close to us in the window-niche. Madame Goethe quickly ate her soup, and rang the bell for the servant to bring the second course. When she appeared and placed two dishes on the table, madame became greatly embarrassed. 'That is a dinner,' she said, 'that ought to be ashamed of showing its mean face in the presence of two little princesses so beautiful, and dressed in brocade! Why, it is nothing but an omelet and a salad.' And she then cut off a small piece of the omelet and put it among the green leaves of the salad. We looked on, and the dish seemed by far more desirable to us than the imperial ox. In spite of our brocade dresses, we were not at all ashamed of having a strong appetite. I looked at my sister Frederica, and she looked at me, and then both of us looked at the omelet, and at our governess. Finally, I was unable to resist the temptation any longer, and said, timidly, 'Madame Goethe, pray let me also have a little.' 'Ah, yes, dear madame,' said my sister, 'give us some.'"

The two princesses interrupted the queen's narrative by loud laughter, and the king himself joined gayly in it.

"That was right, mamma," exclaimed the crown prince. "Your story has given me an excellent appetite for omelet, and I have eaten all on my plate."

"That is just what I intended," said the queen, smiling.

"But what is the end of the story?" asked the crown prince. "Did Madame Goethe give you some? I hope she complied with the request of the Queen of Prussia."

"I was not yet Queen of Prussia, my son," said Louisa, with a slight expression of melancholy; "but even queens beg sometimes in vain. Then, however, I did not. The kind old lady cheerfully consented, and it was of no avail that Madame Gelieux admonished us not to deprive Madame Goethe of her dinner, and not to eat at so unusual an hour. We moved our chairs to the table; Madame Goethe laid two covers for us, and, notwithstanding the brocade dresses, and the coronation of the emperor, the two princesses of Mecklenburg commenced partaking of the omelet and salad with the strong appetite of peasant-girls. Madame Goethe looked at us with a smile; our governess, however, frowningly. But only after eating all before us, did we look up and see the kind countenance of Madame Goethe, and the angry air of Madame Gelieux. The dish had greatly increased our courage; instead of being afraid of the governess, we only looked at the face of the dear old lady, and when she said, 'Now I wish I had some good dessert for my two little princesses,' I exclaimed quickly, 'I know something that I would like to have for dessert!'

"'I know it also!' exclaimed sister Frederica, 'we have already been wishing for it for a whole week.' 'Well, what is it?' asked Madame Goethe. 'Tell me what you wish, and I pledge you my word your wish shall be fulfilled, if it is at all in my power.' 'Dear Madame Goethe,' I exclaimed, imploringly, 'a week ago we saw your servant-girl pumping water at the well, and we have ever since been longing to pump water just once!' 'Yes, to pump water just once, but to our heart's content,' begged sister Frederica. 'You shall do so!' exclaimed Madame Goethe, laughing merrily, 'come, we will go to the well in the yard; there you may pump.' 'No, *mesdames*, that is impossible,' exclaimed the governess, approaching in her dignity, and placing herself with outspread arms in front of the door, 'never shall I consent to so unseemly a proceeding.' 'Unseemly!' exclaimed Madame Goethe, indignantly. 'Why should it be unseemly for the dear little princesses to move their arms like other children, and to draw up the fresh spring-water. It is an innocent pleasure, and they shall have it as sure as I am Goethe's mother. Come, I will conduct you to the well.' And she walked proudly across the room to the small door opposite. We accompanied her, and slipped out, Madame Goethe following us. When Gelieux exclaimed she would never permit us to pump water, and would, if need be, use force to prevent us from doing so, Madame Goethe shouted angrily: 'I should like to see the person that would deprive the little princesses of such a pleasure, which they can enjoy only at my house!' And just as the governess had reached the door, Madame Goethe closed and bolted it. And we, naughty children, went to the well and pumped water until our arms were quite weak and tired. That is my story of the omelet and salad, and the pumping for dessert," said the queen, concluding her narrative, and bowing with a sweet smile to her husband.

The king nodded pleasantly to her. "I would I were a painter!" he said; "I should paint the scene where both of you are sitting at the round table and eating, while Madame Goethe is looking kindly on, and your governess with an angry frown. It would be a pretty picture, I should think."

"And I, although no painter, will draw the other picture," exclaimed the crown prince; "oh, I see it distinctly before me. A fine old tree in a large yard; under the tree a well, and the two princesses pumping. Madame Goethe in her old-fashioned dress, and at the open window of the side-building the angry face of the governess. Oh, as his majesty says, it will certainly be a pretty picture, and if my mother will graciously permit, I shall present it to her as a proof of my gratitude for her beautiful story."

"Dear, dear mamma," exclaimed Prince William, "if you know another story about an omelet, pray tell it to us, and I will then also try to paint the scene for you like Fred."

"See, Louisa, what you have done," said the king, laughing. "They are anxious to hear your stories, and will, perhaps, become great painters, if you tell them more about omelets."

"That will unfortunately not happen, my husband," said the queen, smiling, "for I do not know any other stories. It is true," she added, musingly, "I remember another omelet that caused me a great deal of pleasure."

"Where was it, dearest, dearest mamma? Oh, pray tell us," exclaimed the crown prince.

"Pray tell us, mamma," begged little Prince William; "be so gracious as to tell us a story for my picture!"

Louisa looked at her husband. The king nodded. "Your last story was so appetizing," he said, gayly, "that I am quite ready to have another."

"I ate this second omelet during our journey to East Prussia, where the estates of the province were to take the oath of allegiance. Oh, my beloved children, that was a splendid journey. The whole world was spread out before me like a bright summer day; everywhere I heard nothing but greetings of love. Everywhere addresses and banquets! festoons, pealing bells, children and young ladies strewing flowers! And our good people did not receive us in so festive a manner through compulsion, or in accordance with an old custom, but because their hearts impelled them; for they had already perceived that the young king, your noble father, would also be their benefactor; they loved and worshipped their king, and, in their kindness, transferred part of their love and veneration to myself. We had already passed through Stargard; the king had preceded me to Coeslin, and I was following him. At noon I arrived in a large village at no great distance from Coeslin. All the peasants and peasant-women came to meet me, dressed in their holiday attire, and the supervisor of the village, to whose hat a large bouquet had been fastened, stepped up to the carriage to deliver an address to me. It contained but a few artless words; the kind-hearted man begged me, in the name of the people, to do their village the honor to alight, and partake of some refreshment, for they desired to entertain the "mother of the country," that the inhabitants of the cities might not deem this an exclusive privilege. You may imagine that I allowed the gentleman to conduct me to the farm-house where the entertainment had been prepared. The cloth was laid on a round table in the small sitting-room, and a huge omelet lay in a large pewter dish. I laughed, and, to the great delight of the peasants looking through the open windows into the room, ate a large piece, while the girls outside sang with the voices of larks."

"And the omelet constituted the whole entertainment?" asked the crown prince, laughing.

"Oh, no, my little epicure; there was also a dessert: bread, and fresh butter wrapped in green leaves, and more fragrant than we ever have it."

"That is a good dessert," exclaimed the prince. "It seems to me the entertainment was not so bad, and—"

At this moment the door opened. High-Chamberlain von Schladen entered and approached the king. "Pardon me, sire, for venturing to disturb you," he said. "A peasant and a peasant-woman have just arrived. They ask urgently and imploringly to see your majesty; and, on being told that you were at dinner, the woman insisted only the more to be at once admitted to her majesty, for she had brought her something necessary to a good dinner. I confess, the bearing of these persons is so simple and kind-hearted that I ventured to disturb you, even at the risk of being rebuked for it."

"Where do they come from?" asked the king, musingly.

"From the lowlands of the Vistula, near Culm, sire, and it seems to me they belong to the sect of the Mennonites, for they never take off their hats, and address everybody with 'thee.' —These patriotic persons have performed their journey on foot, and say that their eyes have known no slumber, and their feet no rest, since they left their village in order to see the king and queen."

"Oh, my husband," exclaimed the queen, "pray do not make them wait any longer. They come hither to manifest their love for us, and love must never be kept waiting in the anteroom."

"That is not my intention," said the king, smiling. "We will admit them at once. Come, Louisa, let us go to your sitting-room, and M. von

Schladen will be so kind as to conduct them thither." He offered his arm to Louisa, she wrapped herself more closely in the Turkish shawl that covered her shoulders, and, taking leave of the two princes with a tender smile, repaired with the king to her own room.

A few minutes afterward the door opened, and M. von Schladen ushered in Abraham Nickel and his wife. The queen sat on a sofa; and the king, supporting his hand on the back of it, stood by her side. Both of them saluted the peasants, who approached slowly, and who, in their simple, neat costume, with their pleasant, healthy faces, which betrayed no embarrassment whatever, made a very agreeable impression. The woman carried on her arm a basket carefully covered with green leaves. The man held in his right hand a small gray bag, which seemed to be heavy. Both saluted the royal couple very reverentially—the woman making a deep courtesy, and the man bowing, without, however, taking off his broad-brimmed hat.

"I suppose thee to be the king, our good sovereign," said the peasant, fixing his fine lustrous eyes on the king's countenance.

"I am the king," said Frederick William, kindly.

"And I see by thy beautiful face," exclaimed the woman, pointing with her hand at Louisa, "thee is the queen, the dear mother of our country—Louisa, whom all love—for whom we are always praying, and whom we are teaching our children to love and pray for."

"I thank you, kind folks," exclaimed the queen, feelingly, "I thank you. Yes, pray for me, and above all, pray for Prussia; pray that she may be saved and protected, for when Prussia is happy I am."

"Prussia will be happy again, and the Lord will not forsake her!" exclaimed the woman. "All of us hope for it, and we wandered hither to bring to our beloved king and queen the greetings of their faithful subjects in the lowlands of Culm, and to tell their majesties that we are praying day and night that God may drive the French from the country, and render our king and queen again powerful. But with your leave we should like to give you a small proof of our regard in the presents we have brought."

The king nodded his consent, while the queen smiled and said: "What you give us with loving hearts we will accept with loving hearts."

"What I have brought is but little," said the woman. "But I have been told that our gracious queen likes to eat good fresh butter, and that the young princes and princesses are also fond of sandwiches; now," she added, removing the leaves from the basket, "this butter is clean and good; I churned it myself in my dairy, and as the article is so very scarce at present, I thought it would be acceptable, and the gracious queen would not spurn my humble gift. Thee looks so kind-hearted and good, dear queen, and I am glad to see thee face to face, and shall be doubly so if thee will be so kind as to accept my butter."

"I accept it joyfully," exclaimed the queen, taking the basket which the woman presented to her. "I thank you for your nice present, my dear woman, and I myself will put some of it to-day on the sandwiches of my sons, who shall eat them in honor of good Mde. Nickel."

"And now I should like to beg leave to present a small gift to the king," said the peasant. "I—"

"Ah, I guess what it is," exclaimed the king, merrily. "You bring me a fine cheese to be eaten with the fresh butter."

"No, most gracious king. Thy loyal Mennonite subjects in the province of Prussia have learned with the most profound grief how great the distress is which God has inflicted upon thee, thy house, and thy states. We have learned that the funds of thy military chest are entirely exhausted—that the French have put them into their pockets. All this affected us most painfully, and we thought thee might sometimes even be out of pocket-money. All the men, women, and children of our community, therefore, looked into their saving-boxes, and contributed joyfully the mite that is to manifest the love we entertain for our king. And here is the money we have collected, good king, and I would urgently entreat thee in the name of our community graciously to accept the trifle offered thee by thy faithful Mennonite subjects, who will never cease to love and pray for thee."

"No," exclaimed the king, in a tremulous voice, his face quivering with profound emotion, "no, I am not poor so long as I have still subjects so good and loyal as you are!" And he offered his hand with a grateful look.

The queen had listened to these words with increasing emotion; her beautiful countenance was beaming with joy; her eyes were lifted to heaven, and her lips seemed to whisper a prayer of gratitude. When the king cordially shook hands with the Mennonite, the queen, overcome by her feelings, burst into tears—tears such as she had not shed for a long while. She took the costly Turkish shawl from her shoulders and threw it around the surprised woman.

"Keep it in memory of this interview," whispered the queen, in a voice choked by tears.

"Thee permits me, kind king, to give thee our

little savings, and to place them on this table?" asked Abraham Nickel.

"I do," said the king. The peasant stepped to the table. After deliberately untying the string of the gray linen bag, he turned it upside down, and poured out the contents. The queen uttered an exclamation of surprise, and the king himself was unable to suppress his astonishment; for gold-piece after gold-piece rolled from the bag and fell ringing in a bright pile on the table. "Well, indeed," said the king, "my people of the Vistula have good things in their saving-boxes."

"There are three thousand louis-d'or, dear king," said Abraham Nickel. "Unfortunately, this is all, although we ardently desired to make you a better present."

"Three thousand louis-d'or are too much," replied the king, "and I cannot accept the sum as a mere gift. Accept my thanks, and rest assured that I shall ever gratefully remember your kindness. I will, however, accept it as a present now, but at a later day, when times are more prosperous, it must be considered as a loan, which I shall repay with interest. Accept a receipt, my friend, and tell the elders of your community to preserve it carefully, that I may redeem it." *

"The king's will be done," said Nickel. "If times remain as they are now, thy receipt, dear king, shall be preserved in our community as a sacred token of thy love. But when affairs are better, then thee may do as thee pleases, and we will gladly permit our king to fill again the saving-boxes of his people."

"There will be better times for Prussia," said the king, solemnly, "for I hope in God and in my countrymen. I hope that we shall have strength to outlive these evil days, and to be worthy of the prosperity to come. Prussia is not lost; she cannot be, for her people and her king are united in love and fealty, and that is the source of heroic deeds. God save Prussia!"

"God save Prussia!" exclaimed the queen, raising her tearful eyes and clasped hands.

"God save Prussia!" whispered the peasant and his wife, bowing their heads in silent prayer.

* The king did not forget his promise. In 1816, when the fatherland had been delivered, he requested the authorities of Mariemverder to give him information about Abraham Nickel. It was ascertained that the poor man, owing to the calamities of war, had lost his whole property, his buildings having been burned down by the enemy. The king had them rebuilt in a much better style than before, gave him ample means to start again, and redeemed the due-bill he had given to the Mennonites.—Vide Hippel's work on Frederick William III., vol. iii., p. 291.

BOOK V.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

FRENCH ERFURT.

ERFURT had undergone a great transformation in the course of a single week. The quiet German fortress, and the gloomy streets and deserted public places, had become a gay capital. There were constantly seen crowds of French footmen in rich liveries, high-born gentlemen with their stars on their breasts, and gaping idlers looking wonderingly at the change. But what feverish activity and toil had been required to effect this! Paris—nay, all France, had to contribute their treasures. Long lines of wagons had conveyed to Erfurt costly furniture, covered with velvet and gilt ornaments, from the imperial *garde-meubles* of Paris, magnificent porcelain from Sèvres, precious gobelins and silks from Lyons and Rouen, rare wines from Bordeaux, tropic fruits from Marseilles, and truffles from Périgord. Not only the castle, but also the prominent private residences, had been decorated in the most sumptuous style. An army of cooks and kitchen-boys had garrisoned the basements and kitchens filled with the delicacies brought from the principal cities of Europe.

France had adorned Erfurt as a bride ready to receive her lord, and the German princes had come as bridesmen. Nearly every German state had sent its sovereign or crown prince. There were the Kings of Saxony, Würtemberg, Bavaria, and Westphalia; the Dukes of Hesse-Darmstadt, Baden, Weimar, Gotha, Oldenburg, Schwerin, and Strelitz, and more than twenty of the petty sovereigns in which Germany abounded. For the first time all seemed to be united, and to have one purpose. This was, to do homage to the Emperor Napoleon.

He intended to come to Erfurt to meet again the friend he had gained at Tilsit, the Emperor Alexander. Nearly eighteen months had passed since the first meeting of the two monarchs. Since that time the morning sky of their friendship had been overcast. The meeting at Erfurt was to renew their former relations. Both emperors felt that they could not do without each other, and they sought this meeting with equal eagerness. Alexander desired to continue his war against Sweden for the possession of Finland. Napoleon had not yet been able to bring the great struggle in Spain to a successful end, and had, therefore, to remain at peace with the only sovereign whose power and enmity he had still to fear. Besides, the two emperors loved each other; they had exchanged at Tilsit ardent vows. The world was aware of this, and could not but regard it as a matter of course that the imperial friends longed to meet again. The auspicious period was fixed for the 27th of September, 1808. The appointed hour had struck; the cannon and the pealing of bells announced the advent of Napoleon.—All the thoroughfares and public places were crowded. The people were hastening with wild impetuosity to the streets through which he was to pass; the members of the municipality, dressed in their official robes, proceeded to the gate where they were to welcome him; the windows of all the houses were open; and there appeared beautiful women, adorned with flowers and gems, awaiting his approach. The imperial guard formed in line to the soul-stirring notes of their band, and the Kings of Saxony and Würtemberg, and the whole host of German princes, had assembled in the large hall of the government palace to salute the emperor.

A noise as of distant thunder seemed to shake the air; it drew nearer and nearer. It was the cheering of the people and the soldiers, for the emperor had now entered the city. The procession moved on, greeted by the bright eyes of the ladies, and the shouts of the multitude. Napoleon,

wearily leaning back in the open barouche, drawn by six richly-caparisoned horses, thanked the people with an indifferent wave of his hand, and saluted the ladies with a scarcely perceptible nod. His countenance was immovable, and the public excitement was unable to betray him into the faintest sign of gratification. The noisy welcome seemed as stale to him as some old song which he had heard too often. As his carriage made but slow headway through the surging mass, the emperor started with a movement of impatience. "Forward!" he shouted in a loud voice, and the adjutants, riding on both sides, repeated to the outriders, "Forward! forward!" The carriage rolled on at a full gallop, regardless of the populace, followed by a cavalcade of marshals and generals, and the coaches of Champagny, Maret, and Talleyrand. Having arrived in front of the palace, the emperor quickly entered. At the landing of the staircase he was received by the German princes, headed by the King of Saxony. Napoleon embraced the old gentleman with an expression of genuine tenderness. "Sire," said the king, "you see you have made my heart young again—you have restored the elasticity of youth to my old body. I hastened hither with courier-horses in order to greet you first, and in the impatience of my heart I have been at the window for several hours to have the happiness of seeing your majesty."

"Oh," exclaimed Napoleon, bending a sinister glance on the other princes, "I would my love could succeed in rendering you as young as your heart; it would greatly promote the welfare of Germany. You would regenerate the ancient German empire, and transform it into a real and lasting union." He cordially shook hands with the king, saluted the other foreigners with an impatient nod, and walked to his rooms, where his *valets de chambre* were awaiting him.

Half an hour afterward Minister Champagny was called into the emperor's cabinet. When the minister entered, Napoleon was pacing the room; his hands folded, as usual, behind him. A map, covered with colored pins, and on which he cast a long, dark look, lay on the table. Champagny remained in respectful silence at the door, waiting the moment when it would please the emperor to notice his presence. At length Napoleon stood facing him. "Champagny," he asked, "do you know why we are here, and what is the object of this meeting?"

"Your majesty has not done me the honor of making a confidant of me," said the minister, respectfully; "hence, I do not know, but merely venture to surmise, what may be the object."

"And what do you surmise?"

"I suppose that your majesty intends to give a fresh impetus to the friendship of the Emperor Alexander, and to conclude a firm alliance with him in order to be sure of him, and to be able to carry on the war in Spain without hinderance, and, if need be, if—"

"Well, why do you hesitate?" said Napoleon, impatiently.

"If need be," added Champagny, "to declare war against Austria."

"Then you really believe in the possibility of such a war?" he said. "Yes, you are right; we must not suffer ourselves to be deceived by apparent humility and equivocal friends; they have a smile on their lips, but at heart they are as hostile as ever, and while with their right hand they greet us, they are arming with their left. But woe to those scoundrels if I catch them at their tricks! I will so punish them as to shatter their thrones and crush their power. Those men who style themselves 'princes by the grace of God' have never learned any thing and never will. They close their ears with arrogance against the events that unerringly speak to them, and they are still lulled to sleep by the nursery-song of 'unapproachable majesty.' But I will arouse them by my cannon, and my armies shall sing them a song of the new majesty that Heaven has sent into the world. It has overtoppled the thrones of Naples and Spain; so it will that of Austria, if such be my desire! Austria must not persist in her insolence, and dare to menace me!"

Frowning, he commenced again rapidly walking the apartment. "Champagny," he said, stopping in the middle of the room, "come here close to me, that even the walls will not hear what I tell you. You shall learn the object of our journey to Erfurt, and I will inform you what you are to do. I have hitherto treated you in the same manner as the admirals to whom I give dispatches to be opened only on the high seas. You have now reached them, Champagny, and shall, therefore, learn your orders. I have taken you with me because you are to assist in accomplishing an important object. I have selected you, and you alone, for I know that I may confide in your discretion, and that you will not betray any secret intrusted to you. Not a word of what you hear now must ever pass your lips—not a hint even to Talleyrand. Talleyrand is a sneak and a traitor, who would like to be on good terms with all parties, so as to be sure of their support whatever may happen. Oh, I know him; I have fathomed him, and can read the thoughts which he takes the greatest pains to conceal. I know

that I ought to distrust him—that he is intriguing with Austria; and that, if I suffered him to share in our scheme, he would betray the secrets of my cabinet to the Austrian ambassador. I profit by his services whenever he is useful by his intrigue and diplomatic jugglery; but, I repeat it, I do not trust him."

"Sire, I swear that I should deem myself dishonored if my lips ever betray a syllable of the secret projects of my emperor!" exclaimed the minister, solemnly.

"Well, well, I trust you," said Napoleon, nodding to him. "Now, listen!" He took the minister by one of the golden buttons of his velvet coat and drew him closer to his side. "I have brought about this meeting because I desire to dupe the Emperor Alexander."

Champagny started and looked surprised. Napoleon smiled. "I shall accomplish my purpose so far as Alexander himself is concerned," he said; "but you must do the same with regard to the Russian minister, hard-headed old Romanzoff. And let me tell you why. You know what I promised Alexander at Tilsit, and by what means I succeeded in winning his heart. He is an idealist; the plans of his grandmother Catharine are constantly haunting him, and his thoughts are fixed on Turkey—particularly on Constantinople. He is ambitious, fickle, and visionary. I promised to realize his visions, and thereby gained his confidence. I promised when the time came, not only not to oppose his plans against Turkey, but to support them to the best of my power. In consideration of this promise, he approved my ideas with regard to Spain, and solemnly pledged me his word that he would raise no objection if I hurl the Bourbons from the Spanish throne, and place one of my brothers on it. He has kept his word, for, although the crown is still uneasy on the head of my brother Joseph, yet he is a king, and Alexander will believe that it is time for me to keep my word. His envoys, and his confidential minister, old Romanzoff, have already urged the demands of their master. Joseph having made his entry into Madrid, Alexander desires to enter Constantinople. His impatience has risen to the highest point, and to calm and conciliate him, I consented to his desire for a meeting. He will renew his demands concerning Constantinople, and I shall once more promise."

"Will your majesty promise him Constantinople?" asked Champagny.

"Yes," said Napoleon, smiling, "promise! But I do not intend to perform. Never will I consent to give Constantinople to the Emperor of Russia, for I would thereby surrender the key of a universal monarchy into his hands—he would be at once master of Europe and Asia. He often instructed Caulaincourt to assure me he did not want the whole of Turkey; he did not claim any territory south of the Balkan, nor any part of Roumelia—not even Adrianople—only Constantinople with its neighborhood. He calls it the 'Cat's Tongue,' from its shape, and is more anxious to obtain it than the ancient Romans ever were to indulge in the delicacy of the tongues of nightingales. But if Russia possessed this cat's tongue, it would be transformed into a wolf's, armed with formidable teeth against all commerce and national intercourse. Never shall I permit Russia to annex Constantinople, for that would be destroying the equilibrium of Europe."

"But, sire, you yourself said just now that the Emperor Alexander was most anxious to seize that city, and that the object of his journey to Erfurt was principally to obtain the consent of your majesty to its conquest."

"And I told you also that my object was to dupe and intoxicate him gradually by delusive friendship and promises, by festivities and false homage, until it is indifferent to him whether, as a compensation for the acquisition of Spain by my brother, I give him Constantinople and the Balkan, or something else, provided it is palatable. He has an awful appetite for territory, and it is important to satisfy it in one way or another. It is easy to persuade a hungry man that a very common dish is good roast meat. It is our business, therefore, to suggest to the emperor and his minister another conquest instead of Constantinople, and so to dress up the idea that they may relish it, and ask for nothing else."

"Ah, sire," exclaimed Champagny, sighing, "it will be easy for your majesty to fascinate the emperor. But my efforts with his old minister Romanzoff are likely to be utterly unavailing. I am not well versed in that art of which you are a master, and he is too old and shrewd to be fascinated by any one. He is not easily deluded, and his eyes are steadfastly fixed on Constantinople. It is his most fervent hope to be hailed in heaven by Peter the Great, after assisting Alexander in accomplishing the will of his illustrious ancestor."

"And yet we must succeed," exclaimed Napoleon, stamping on the floor. "I tell you, Champagny, I will and must succeed! No objections! I told you that I have made up my mind, and nothing can shake my determination. You will commence by encouraging Romanzoff in his hopes, and throw out only, now and then, a vague hint that there are countries, the annexation of

which would be more important and advantageous to Russia. After having prepared his mind in this manner for our plan, you will gradually, and as soon as I have gained over the emperor, point out to him the conquest which Russia ought previously to make, and prove to him that Moldavia and Wallachia would be the very best territorial aggrandizement which he could desire."

"Your majesty intends, then, to permit the Emperor of Russia to annex Moldavia and Wallachia?" asked the minister.

"Yes. I must satisfy him with some compensation for Constantinople. And, it seems to me, the fertile provinces of the Danube, if I grant them to him immediately and unreservedly, are an acquisition which ought to content any ambition. I cannot do without the friendship of Alexander at this moment. Spain is in a state of insurrection, and, owing to Joseph's timidity, will not be soon reduced to submission. Austria is trying to get up a quarrel with us; she is secretly and perfidiously preparing for an attack, and is only waiting for fresh defeats of my army in Spain to declare war against me. Prussia, it is true, is not able to injure me, for I am keeping her under my heel; but if I were compelled to withdraw my foot for an instant, she would slip away and unite with my enemies. Nor do I trust my other allies in Germany. They are faithful and devoted only so long as they are afraid of me; they would forsake me as soon as they see my position endangered. They submitted reluctantly to my orders to furnish me with auxiliaries for my army in Spain. If I were to insist on another levy, all these petty princes of the Confederation of the Rhine would flatly refuse, provided there was a prospect of their succeeding in their opposition. I must keep them down by the terror with which I inspire them. I must prove to all those revolutionary elements fermenting in Germany—to insurgents, from the throne to the cottage—to all those miserable conspirators and demagogues—that I stand as firm as a rock, from which their fury will recoil. United with Russia, I will make all Europe tremble. The echoes of the festivities of Erfurt shall penetrate everywhere, from London to Constantinople; the whole world looks upon us and sees the Emperors of Russia and France side by side. Amid these enchantments I believe I shall succeed in persuading my friend Alexander to accept temporarily Moldavia and Wallachia as a sufficient indemnity for Constantinople. You know your duty now, Champagny; lay your mines skilfully, and you will succeed in blowing up the old granite fortress of Romanzoff."

"Sire, I assure you I will assist you to the best of my ability," said the minister. "Your majesty, however, will permit me to ask a question. The promise of the annexation of Moldavia and Wallachia is not to be a mere sham, and your majesty will really permit Russia to seize these two provinces?"

Napoleon smiled, and, violently pulling the minister's ear in his usual jocular way, said, "What a rash and indiscreet question! Of course, we shall promise the annexation. When it is to be fulfilled we must delay it as long as possible, and the rest will depend on events. In order that I may know exactly how far you have progressed with Romanzoff, you will write down your conversations with him every day, and also your plans, hopes, and fears; I desire to have every night a letter from you on the table at my bedside. Adieu!" He nodded pleasantly, and while Champagny withdrew, the emperor called in a loud voice for Constant, his *valet de chambre*.

"Did you send for Talma?" he asked Constant.

"Sire, Talma is waiting for your majesty's orders in the anteroom."

"Very well, let him come in. Have the horses brought to the door. All the marshals and my whole suite must be ready. We set out immediately to meet the Emperor Alexander, but I will previously put on my decoration of St. Andrew's order; then my toilet will be complete.—Talma!"

Constant hastened into the anteroom to inform Talma that the emperor wished to see him, and a moment afterward the great actor made his appearance. "Ah, you have arrived, then, Talma," exclaimed Napoleon, gayly, "and I hope you have brought with you the most select company of actors, the finest costumes, and the best pieces?"

"I have brought hither, sire, the actors and the theatre of the conqueror of the world," said Talma, "and that says every thing. The eyes of your majesty will be on us; that is all that is needed to inspire us."

"But you will also play before an audience such as perhaps will never again assemble," said Napoleon, smiling. "You will have a pit occupied by kings and sovereign princes."

"Sire," said Talma, bowing deeply, "where your majesty is, there is but one king and master."

"No; there is another king, and his name is Talma," exclaimed Napoleon, smiling. "These German princes may take a lesson from Talma as to the manner in which a king should bear himself in prosperity as well as in adversity. You will, therefore, perform Œdipus, Cinna, Mohammed, and Andromache, that kings may see how

true monarchs ought to behave. I could have wished, however, that you had prepared not only the tragedies of Racine, Corneille, and Voltaire, but also some of the comedies of Molière. You know how highly I esteem them. But the Germans would not understand them. We must show them the beauty and sublimity of our tragic theatre; they will appreciate it better than the profound wit of Molière. Make it indispensable for the actors, and very particularly the actresses, to speak as distinctly and loudly as possible, that the Emperor Alexander, who is somewhat hard of hearing, may understand. You are the representatives of the honor of French literature; just say so to the artists in my name, and order the ladies especially to refrain from their wonted ogling and coquetry. Handsome Mademoiselle Bourgoin likes also to make conquests, not only on the stage, but among the spectators; and, while she is playing tragic *amoureuses*, she casts on the audience glances that are more suitable to a beauty of the Palais Royal than to a heroine, and which contrast strangely with the chaste characters she represents. Tell her that I desire her to abstain from such follies; she must not desecrate the buskin by the *minauderies* of a *soubrette*.* For the rest, I rely entirely on you, Talma. The eyes of Europe are fixed on Erfurt at this moment, and your immortality is sure."

"Sire, it was so on the day when, after the representation of Cinna, your majesty told me that you were satisfied with me."

"And perform Cinna to-night. I enjoy the pleasure already in anticipation. I ask another question. Did you bring the parts for Voltaire's 'Death of Cæsar?'"

"For the 'Death of Cæsar?'" asked Talma, in surprise. "Your majesty—"

"Ah, you want to tell me that the piece is prohibited in Paris," exclaimed Napoleon, smiling. "But Paris is a Vesuvius—what is inflammatory in France is perfectly harmless in phlegmatic Germany. Let the actors prepare for performing the 'Death of Cæsar;' I will order it to be played in a few days. Tell them so.—Well, Constant, what is the matter?"

"Sire, your majesty desired to put on the large Russian decoration."

"Ah, it is true," said Napoleon; "come, put it on." And while Constant put the broad *cordon* with the diamond star over the emperor's shoulders, and arranged it on his breast, Napoleon turned once more to Talma. "You see," he said, "we monarchs pursue the same course you do. We put on different costumes according to the part we play. I wore a fez in Egypt, and to-day I put on the imperial star of Russia."

"But, sire, everywhere you play your part with masterly skill, and the world, which is your audience, applauds your majesty," exclaimed Talma.

"Oh, it would not be safe to hiss me," said Napoleon, putting on his gloves, and taking the riding-whip which Constant handed to him.

Accompanied by a brilliant suite, the emperor left Erfurt, and took the road to Weimar, whence the Emperor Alexander was to come. French troops lined the way, and behind them was a vast and motley crowd of peasants, who had come from all parts to witness the cavalcade. Napoleon did not hear the enthusiastic shouts of the soldiers, but he noticed the silence of the people, who stared at him with the curiosity with which they would have stared at any other unusual spectacle. He bent his head and rode on, absorbed in reflection; the bridle hung loose in his hand, but his white charger was accustomed to this carelessness, and galloped forward, proud of his melancholy rider.

Duroc rode up. "Sire," he said, "I believe that is the Emperor Alexander."

Napoleon quickly raised his head, and turned his keen eyes in the direction the grand marshal had pointed out. An open barouche, in which a single person sat, was approaching, accompanied by a few horsemen. Napoleon waited. The carriage drew nearer, and the person seated in it was recognized by his uniform and the *grand cordon* of the Legion of Honor.

"It is he—the Emperor Alexander!" exclaimed Napoleon, and rode forward at a gallop, followed by his marshals and generals. The carriage of the Russian emperor also moved more rapidly, and when both were near each other they suddenly halted. Napoleon dismounted; and Alexander, not waiting for the carriage door to be opened, jumped over it. The two monarchs rushed toward each other with open arms, and the soldiers made the welkin ring with "Long live Napoleon! Long live Alexander!"

Napoleon, disengaging himself from the arms of his friend, saluted the Grand-duke Constantine. A horse was brought to the Emperor Alexander, and as he was about to mount he looked in surprise at the splendid animal, as well as at its equipment. "Why," he said, "this looks exactly as though I were going to take a ride on my favorite charger in St. Petersburg. It is precisely of similar color and trappings."

* Alexander fell in love with this actress at Erfurt. Napoleon tried to prevent Mademoiselle Bourgoin from continuing this *liaison*, but the actress was bold enough to defy the wrath of the emperor.

"That proves that the drawings which Caulaincourt sent me were pretty correct," said Napoleon, smiling.

"Ah, then it is another attention of yours," exclaimed Alexander, affectionately pressing the hand of his friend. "Your majesty is bent on infatuating me. I feel perfectly at home on this horse."

"Ah, that is exactly what I wished," said Napoleon; "I sincerely desired that your majesty should feel at home while with me. Well, if it please you, let us ride to Erfurt."

"Very well," said Alexander, vaulting gracefully into the saddle, and offering his hand to Napoleon, on whose right he was riding. The emperors, chatting gayly, rode on to Erfurt. Behind them was the Grand-duke Constantine, between King Jerome of Westphalia, and Murat, Grand-duke of Berg. Then followed the suite of the marshals and generals, and the procession was closed by the carriage of old Romanzoff, Alexander's minister of state. Enthusiastic cheers resounded along the whole road, and now Napoleon, with a serene bow, saluted the multitude. Amid the peals of bells, the booming of cannon, and the cheers of the soldiers and the populace, the two emperors made their entry, halting in front of the hotel. Napoleon alighted first to welcome his guest, and conduct him to the rooms prepared for his reception.

Late on the same day Napoleon received a letter from his Minister Champagny. It contained only the following words: "Sire, I have held the first conference with Romanzoff. It will be very difficult to persuade this stubborn man that a piece of meat on the Danube is as good as the cat's tongue, for which the old gentleman is as clamorous as a hungry child for its dinner."

Napoleon took a pen and affixed the following words: "I have also held the first conference with the Emperor Alexander. There will be no change in my plans. Moldavia and Wallachia as an indemnity for the 'cat's tongue!' We must succeed!" He then folded and sealed the letter, which he immediately sent back to his minister.

CHAPTER XL.

THE CONSPIRATORS.

While the illumination, with which the good people of the French city had celebrated the arrival of the two emperors, was in full blaze on the principal thoroughfares, only a single dim light was to be seen in a small building situated on the corner of one of the more quiet streets. The other windows of this house were dark, and all was silent as though no living beings were dwelling in it. From time to time, a closely-veiled man appeared in the neighborhood, and, after glancing at the light in the upper window, uttered a strange cry. A second light was soon moving to and fro, and disappearing again. The man approached and knocked repeatedly at the door, which opened and admitted him. Twelve men had entered. The light was extinguished; the door bolted on the inside, and profound silence reigned in the building.

The French police had devoted their whole attention to the principal streets of the city, and to the vast crowds that followed the emperors, who, accompanied by kings and princes, proceeded to admire the illumination. There were no eyes for this small, dark house in an obscure alley—no ears to listen to what was going on within. The twelve men who had entered in so mysterious a manner, had assembled in a large back room. They had whispered the password into the ear of the door-keeper, and were at once admitted.

The windows of this room were covered with heavy black curtains, which prevented sound, as well as light, from penetrating to the outside. Thirteen candlesticks were fixed at equal distances in the plain white walls. The man who had entered first approached the first candlestick and lighted the two tapers. He who came next did the same with the next candlestick, and the others followed their example. At this moment the tapers on twelve candlesticks were burning; and only the thirteenth, which contained six tapers, had not yet been lighted. Around the long table standing in the middle of the room, twelve grave and silent men were sitting on cane-chairs, the high backs of which were carved in a peculiar, old-fashioned style; these men were closely wrapped in black cloaks, the capes of which concealed their heads, and their faces were covered with black half-masks, which they had put on immediately after entering the house. At the upper end of the table stood a black easy-chair, which was alone unoccupied. The flashing eyes peering from the capes were directed to this chair; no word was spoken; a breath was almost audible in the motionless assembly. Suddenly a narrow, secret door opened in the opposite wall, and a tall man, dressed and veiled like the others, made his appearance.

The assembly remained as before, and seemed to take no notice of the new-comer. The latter quickly walked to the thirteenth candlestick, and lighted its tapers. The others immediately rose

from their seats and bowed deeply. "The presipent!" they murmured. "We greet him who has called us—we greet the president!" He nodded, and then went to the upper end of the table. Before sitting down, he opened a little the black cloak enveloping his whole form, and the others beheld a heavy silver chain adorning his breast, and to which was fastened a locket, decorated with diamonds. In the middle of it a skull was to be seen, and under it the inscription of "Liberty or Death!" As soon as the rest beheld this, they also opened their cloaks. Each of them wore a similar chain, locket, and inscription.

"Resume your seats, brethren," said the president, "sitting down in the easy-chair. He then said in a loud, solemn voice, "The hour has come for us to act. Germany has called us, and, as obedient sons, we come! Germany, our beloved mother, is here in our midst, although we do not see her. She stands with veiled head and tearful eyes before her children, and asks us to give her an account of what we have done and accomplished. Brethren, are we ready?"

"We are!" all exclaimed, simultaneously.

"When we parted three months ago, my brethren," added the president, "we resolved to meet here to-day. I see that all have remained faithful to their oath. Not one is absent. No taper is unlit—the seats are occupied. Germania, that knows who are hers, and how to call them by their names, although they veil their heads,—Germania thanks you for your fidelity. She awaits our report. Let us speak! He who arrived first will commence."

One at the lower end of the table rose and bowed respectfully. "I arrived first," he said.

"You have the floor, then, my brother," said the president. "Make your report. Where have you been? What connections did you establish? What hopes do you bring?"

"I was in Northern Germany," he replied; "for that was the order which I drew from the urn when we met here three months ago. In the envelope which I received, I found a paper containing the words: 'Ferdinand von Schill at Kolberg.' The first lines of a song were affixed to this address. I repaired immediately to Kolberg, and found Major von Schill engaged in equipping and drilling the second regiment of Brandenburg hussars, of which the king has appointed him commander. The regiment consists of the four brave companies of cavalry with which Lieutenant von Schill undertook his bold and successful raids."

"And did you deliver your credentials to the major, my brother?"

"I did. He received me with a joyful salutation, and sends his greeting and fraternal kiss to the 'patriots.' He said to me: 'We pursue with zeal and courage the purpose which we have sworn to accomplish. Go to the brethren—tell them that they may count on me and my men, and on the people, who are gradually being inspired with the true spirit, and who will rise when the alarm is sounded. When the time comes, the whole of Germany will rise to a man, break her chains, and expel the tyrant. Let us prepare for this hour, in the North and South, in the East and West, that the whole country may be armed at the first battle-cry of freedom! Let us work and toil, keeping each other well informed of our progress. We must all act on one and the same day!'"

"Did you hear the words and greetings of brave Schill, brethren?" asked the president.

"We heard, and engraved them on our heart."

"It is now the turn of the brother who arrived next," said the president. "Make your report."

"Soul-stirring hopes! and I wish you joy of our prospects," said he who had now risen. "At our last meeting I drew from the urn the order to go to Berlin and Königsberg. I was there! Oh, brethren, the days of freedom are near! In Berlin, I was introduced by one of our friends to a circle of patriots, who, like us, have formed a secret society for the purpose of promoting the welfare of the fatherland, and of ushering in the day of freedom. Those patriots are in communication with men sharing their sentiments throughout the whole of Northern Germany; committees are organized everywhere to instruct the people, to disseminate patriotic views, and to gain adherents to the great league of the defenders of the fatherland. Secret depots of arms are being established in every city. The central committee, sitting in Berlin, have taken upon themselves the task of watching the French troops, their numbers, location, and strength; of ascertaining the disposition of the people in the provinces, and of transmitting the results of their observations to the branches of their league, as well as to the other patriotic societies. Henceforth we shall also receive those reports, if one of our brethren will call for them in Berlin.

"Thence, well provided with recommendations by the committee, I repaired to Königsberg. From what I saw there I derived much consolation and hope for the future of the country. The spirit of freedom is fermenting, and high-minded men have erected at Königsberg an altar on which they intend to kindle the sacred fire,

that it may melt our chains. The name of this altar is the 'Tugendbund.' * Noble and illustrious men are at the head of this league; a prince is its president; Stein, the great minister, is its protector; brave General Blücher, Gneisenau, the distinguished officer—in short, the most eminent and popular men of Prussia are members. King Frederick William has approved its by-laws; Queen Louisa is enthusiastically in favor of its patriotic efforts. It does not intend to enter upon a violent struggle, but will prepare the people by its words and example for better days. It intends to increase the moral energy of the nation, that it may also rise in its physical strength, and be able to cope with the invaders. This league, my brethren, purposes to propagate patriotism, courage, attachment to the sovereign and the constitution, love of virtue, art, science, and literature. It intends to cultivate the minds and hearts of the people, that they may shrink from no sacrifice for the welfare of the country. My brethren, the 'Tugendbund' is the head and heart of us all; we shall one day be its arm and sword, and translate its teachings into heroic deeds. It sends its greetings to the brethren, admonishing us never to cease working and toiling, and to maintain a close connection with it, as well as with all our friends, until the great day of deliverance dawns upon us. But I do not bring greetings from that league alone. I have seen also the 'Knights of Louisa,' † and received their fraternal kiss. Brave Major von Nostitz, formerly an intimate friend and adjutant of Prince Louis Ferdinand, is their president, and the noble queen has permitted them the use of her name as a token of her sympathy. As a further expression of her approval, she has presented the president with a silver chain, and all the members of the order wear, as their regalia, a silver chain and a locket with the queen's portrait. The 'Tugendbund' and the 'Knights of Louisa' send greetings to the brethren, and will unite with them in struggling for the same holy cause. They await our messengers, and will inform us of every thing that is done by them, as well as receive information from us concerning our own efforts."

"Your report is highly gratifying," said the president, after a pause. "Deliverance will soon come, and true Germans will be prepared for it. We will now listen to the third brother."

"I was in Westphalia, and bring cheering tidings to the patriotic brethren," said the third brother. "The chains are still clanking in unfortunate Westphalia, but the men are as undaunted as ever. Noble Chevalier von Dörnberg sends his greeting. He admonishes us to toil, and to be prepared. We shall have ready our swords and our strong arms. Thousands of noble and faithful Hessians belong to his league. The honest minds of the people cannot see what right the Corsican emperor had to expel their legitimate ruler, and to place an Italian clown on his throne. Intense indignation at the foreign yoke is prevailing throughout Hessia and Westphalia, and every patriot rallies around Dörnberg waiting for the signal to expel the oppressor. United with us, Dörnberg sends his messengers and receives ours."

"Let the fourth brother make his report," said the president.

"I come from Bavaria, and bring greetings from the society of 'Concordists,' founded by Chevalier von Lang. This society is straining every nerve to bring about the liberation of the country; it is, like our league, preparing the people for their freedom. It is ready to enter into relationship with us."

"And what brings the fifth of the brethren?"

"I bring fraternal kisses from the Rhine, where Jahn, the bold German, is organizing the legion of the 'Black Knights.' I bring also greetings from the chivalrous Duke of Brunswick. The 'Corps of Vengeance,' with skulls on their black helmets, are rallying around the prince, who, with fiery zeal, is preparing for the day when he will avenge the despair and death of his father. The 'Black Knights' and the 'Corps of Vengeance' send us greetings, and are ready to toil with us for the deliverance of our country, and the overthrow of the tyrant."

The president requested the sixth brother to take the floor, and he too stated that he had established connections with leagues having the same common object. The other six made similar statements. Everywhere in Germany they had found patriots, the same hatred of a foreign yoke, and the most ardent longing for freedom.

When the twelfth brother had concluded his report, the president arose. "Brethren," he said, encouragingly, "our night begins to brighten—the day is breaking. Let us, therefore, be vigilant, active, and undaunted. Gather around you the circles of the faithful; initiate and arm them; teach them to be ready for the battle-cry, that they may rise and fight, all for one, and one for all. Set out again on your travels; establish new societies, and join, in a genuine spirit of brotherly love, such as are already in operation. Work for the honor and liberty of Germany. Thousands already belong to us, and you will

* The celebrated "League of Virtue."
† Die Louisenritter.

still enlist thousands more; that, when the trumpet sounds, the brethren may reënforce the army of German liberty, not with a battalion, but with legions of warriors. We have come hither today from all parts of Germany; we know not each other's names, nor have we ever seen each other's faces; yet no one has proved recreant. Go, then, again into the world, and pursue your sacred mission. Three months hence we will again meet at this house at the same hour, and confer as to what ought to be done. Bring the urn, and draw your duties for the next three months."

The man who had last arrived rose and walked to the opposite wall, at which the president pointed, as he said, "Press the golden button which you see fixed in the wall."

The conspirator obeyed, and immediately a small door opened, revealing a black urn, which he handed to the president, who said, "Come hither, brethren, and draw your lots."

The twelve men rose successively and stepped to the urn, from which each drew a small folded paper, and, approaching the light, immediately learned his mission by opening the lot; as soon as he had read its contents, he burned it, extinguished his tapers, and withdrew, without word, glance, or gesture. Nine had already left. Only four candlesticks remained lighted—three of the conspirators, besides the president, were still in the room. Each of these three men stood near the burning tapers, and looked in grave silence at the open paper in his hand.

"Why are you here still, brethren?" asked the president.

"My order says that I am to remain here," answered the man to whom the president addressed himself.

"My order says the same," exclaimed the secsecond brother.

"Mine is the same," said the third.

"Come hither and listen to me, brethren," commanded the president. "What is the motto of our league?"

"'Liberty or death!'" exclaimed the three men, simultaneously. "Our fortunes, our lives, our blood, for Germany! If need be, death for the attainment of liberty, whether it be on the field of battle, in a dungeon, or on the scaffold!"

"Or on the scaffold!" echoed the president. "Do you remember, brethren, that, when we met for the first time, I told you Germany might stand in need of a Mutius Scaevola, and require him to assassinate Porsenna? Do you remember that we all swore, if the day should come to imitate that ancient patriot?"

"We do."

"That day has come," said the president, solemnly. "Germany requires a Mutius Scaevola, to kill Porsenna, and, if he should miss him, to suffer as stoically as the Roman youth. Enough German blood has been shed. Thousands of our brethren would still have to die, if we meet the tyrant in open combat. We must do this, if we cannot get rid of him in any other way. But before resorting to it, before permitting Germany to be again devastated by revolution and war, we will try another way, the course pursued by the Roman. When the tyrant is dead, Germany will be free and happy, and the exultation of his countrymen will console the conscience of him whom the world will call an assassin."

"That is true," said the three conspirators.

"Yes," responded the president. "There are four of us here. Two shall avenge Germany. It is necessary that two should undertake the task, for if one should be unsuccessful, the other may not."

"But there are only three of us here," said one of the disguised men.

"No," replied the president, "there are four; I am the fourth. You must not prevent me from participating in a deed requiring intrepid courage, and which cannot but involve incalculable dangers. I insist on taking part in it."

"But the league stands in need of your services. What would become of us if you should draw the lot, and, in carrying out the plan, fail and be arrested?"

"In that case, brethren, you will announce on the day of the next meeting, when the chair remains unoccupied, that the president has died in the cause, and you will elect another chief. But, a truce to further objections! Let us draw lots. Here are two white and two black balls which I put into the urn. Those who draw the black balls will leave together, and jointly concert a plan for the death of the tyrant. The blow must be struck in the course of a week, while he is still in this city."

"It must be," echoed the three, in solemn tones.

"But let us swear not to attempt any life but his—that no innocent blood be shed—that the dagger or the pistol be aimed at him alone. Let us swear not to undertake any thing that might endanger others!"

"We do so swear, for to destroy any but the tyrant would be murder. Now let us extinguish all the lights save one, and simultaneously draw a ball from the urn."

"Lift up your hands and let us see the balls!"

said the president. There was a white ball in his own hand. "It was not God's will. He did not choose me," he said, with a sigh.

"He has chosen us," said the two who held black balls. They grasped each other's hands, and their eyes seemed to read each other's thoughts. He who had drawn the other white ball inclined his head and left the room.

"We go together; our ways do not separate," said the two who had drawn the black balls, and walked arm in arm toward the door.

The president gazed after them until they had disappeared. Extinguishing the last taper, he groped cautiously along until he reached the door, and stepping out into a corridor, hastened across it to the landing of a staircase, at the foot of which a small dim lamp was burning. Before descending, he took off the mask that had covered his face, and the cloak in which he had been wrapped, and, rolling them into a bundle, he concealed it in a drawer fixed under the first step of the staircase, and which was visible only to initiated eyes. In the flickering light of the lamp the beholder might have discerned his tall, slender form, and youthful countenance, whose manly expression contrasted with his long golden hair. He hastened down-stairs, and crossed the hall into the street. The noise had ceased, and nearly all the lights had burnt out. As he turned a corner rapidly, he was attracted by a transparency. The inscription, in large letters on a crimson ground, read: "*Gäb's jetzt noch einen Göttersohn, so wäre es Napoleon!*" *

A flash of anger burst from the youth's eyes, and he raised his clinched fist menacingly. "You miserable dogs," he said, in a low voice, "when the true Germans come, you will hide yourselves in the dust!" He walked rapidly until he reached a small house at the lower end of the street, and softly entering, glided across the hall, cautiously ascended the staircase, halted in front of a door up-stairs, and gently rapped. It opened immediately, and a young woman of surpassing beauty appeared on the threshold. "Oh, Frederick, is it really you?" she whispered, embracing him. "You are mine again, beloved Frederick! You did not draw the fatal lot! Heaven refused the sacrifice which you were ready to make."

"It is so, Anna," said the young man. "But why do you weep, dearest? You were formerly so courageous, and approved my determination to engage in that desperate enterprise!"

She clasped her hands, lifting her large black eyes to heaven. "Abraham was ready to sacrifice his son," she said, "but when his offering was not accepted, he was thankful. Thus I also thank and praise God at this moment!"

"Yes," said the young man, gloomily, "He rejected my offering, and for the present I am free. I come to take leave of you, beloved Anna; I must depart this very night."

"You are going to leave me!" she exclaimed in dismay. "Ah, you have deceived me, then—you have drawn the fatal lot! You come to bid me farewell, because you are to perpetrate the terrible deed!"

"No, Anna. I swear to you by our love I am free! I did not draw the lot. But I must go to Leipsic. My mission here has been accomplished, and I must be about my business. The president of the patriotic brethren must descend from his exalted position, and once more become a poor insignificant merchant. But I know, and predict it, Anna, there will be a day when Germany will choose me to deliver her from the tyrant. A presentiment tells me that the two who have drawn the black balls to-day will not succeed. Their hands trembled when they held up the balls, and I saw that they started when they perceived them to be black. Yes, they will fail; but I shall not! It is reserved for me; a shout of joy will resound throughout the country, and the people will exclaim, 'We are delivered from the tyrant; Germany is free, and the name of our deliverer is Frederick Staps!'"

* "If there were now a son of the gods, he would be Napoleon."

CHAPTER XLI.

THE FESTIVITIES OF ERFURT AND WEIMAR.

FESTIVITIES were succeeded by festivities, amusements by amusements, and these days of Erfurt glided by in friendship, pleasure, and love. Napoleon was the host. It was he who received the Emperor of Russia, the kings, the dukes, and the princes, with their legions of courtiers and cavaliers, and treated all the members of these different petty courts with imperial munificence. In return there were universal manifestations of homage and devotion. The kings and princes every morning attended his levee. He arranged the entertainments that were to take place, and designated those who were to participate in them. All bowed to him, even the Emperor Alexander himself. The most cordial feeling prevailed between the two emperors. They were always seen arm in arm, like two loving youths, jealous of every minute that separated them. At the dinner

table, at the theatre, at the balls and concerts, they always came together into the proud society that awaited them. At dinner, Napoleon, playing the polite and obliging host, always had Alexander placed at his right. At the theatre, directly behind the orchestra, were two gilded easy-chairs on a small platform, and the two emperors were enthroned on them near each other; on the floor behind stood four small arm-chairs, occupied by the Kings of Bavaria, Würtemberg, Saxony, and Westphalia; and in the rear, on common chairs, sat the dukes, princes, counts, and the large array of cavaliers and courtiers. The queens and princesses were seated in the proscenium-boxes on both sides of the stage, and the ladies of the *haute-volée* in their rich toilets and wealth of jewelry filled the first tier.

Napoleon kept the promise he had made to Talma: that celebrated actor played before a pit of kings, and it was, perhaps, this fact, or the expectant face of Napoleon, whose eyes were on him, or the presence of Alexander, who was never weary of praising him—it was probably all this that enkindled the actor's enthusiasm. Never before had Talma played more effectively—never before had he assumed such a dignity for enthroned greatness, or better studied its bearing in adversity. His expression of hatred, love, and grief, in his impersonations, were never more famous than in these gala-days of Erfurt. A sort of inspiration pervaded the great artist, and his enthusiasm infected the spectators, especially Alexander, who was carried away by Talma's passion in the representation of "Œdipus." When the actor exclaimed, "The friendship of a great man is a boon of the gods!" the Russian emperor bent over Napoleon, and seizing his hand pressed it against his breast. A murmur of applause was heard; all appeared astonished at this public demonstration; even Œdipus on the stage seemed to be impressed, and his voice trembled. Napoleon alone remained grave and calm, not a feature changed or betrayed the satisfaction that his heart could not but feel at this moment; he thanked Alexander only by a glance, and his attention seemed to be again directed to the stage.

Late at night Napoleon found, as usual, a letter from his minister Champagny. "Old Romanzoff insists on the prompt fulfilment of the promises of Tilsit," wrote the minister. "Constantinople—nothing but Constantinople—seems to the stubborn Russian an equivalent for Spain. I believe the peremptory orders only of his master will subdue this obstinacy."

"Ah," murmured Napoleon, crumpling the paper in his hand, "I must put a stop to this. We must arrive at a definite result. I shall utter the decisive word to-morrow!"

On the following morning the kings and princes appeared in vain in the anteroom of the Emperor Napoleon to attend his levee. He had risen at an unusually early hour, and, allured by the sunny autumnal morning, visited his friend Alexander, who had just risen when Napoleon, unannounced, entered with a smiling face.

"Ah," exclaimed Alexander, rushing toward him with a cry of exultation, and embracing him affectionately, "sire, I dreamed of you all night; you were here at my side, while I was sleeping, and all seemed bright, but when I opened my eyes and did not see you, the room appeared dark, although the sun was shining. But now you are here, and my dreams are realized."

Napoleon's face suddenly turned gloomy, and the smile disappeared from his lips. "I also had a dream," he said, gravely. "It seemed to me as though I lay on a bed of flowers, and two stars were twinkling above me, and as they came nearer I saw that they were not stars, but bright eyes beaming in a manly face, and looking at me with tenderness. I was fascinated. I raised myself as if borne on angel-wings, and stretched out my arms toward the approaching form. Suddenly I uttered a scream; the friend had been changed into a wolf that rushed toward me, and fixing his eyes on mine, tore my breast and fed upon my heart. Oh, I was in horrible pain—not imaginary but real—for I screamed so loudly that Constant, my *valet de chambre*, hastened from the adjoining room and awakened me. Even now that I think of it I tremble, and sadness fills my soul." He bent his head on his breast, and, folding his hands behind him, paced the room slowly.

Alexander looked smilingly at him, but approaching, said: "Sire, why this melancholy? In truth, when looking at you, one might think, my august friend, that you believed in dreams."

"I do," exclaimed Napoleon, quickly raising his head. "Dreams are revelations from on high! Had Julius Cæsar believed in his dreams, and in the prophecies of the astrologers, he would not have fallen by the daggers of assassins."

"But how will your majesty interpret the dream that tormented you last night?" asked Alexander.

Napoleon bent a strange look on his frank countenance. "Alexander," he said, in a low voice, "could you ever transform yourself into a wolf, and tear out my heart?"

"I, Napoleon, I?" ejaculated Alexander, starting back in dismay. "Your majesty, then, does not believe in my friendship, in the profound ad-

miration for you that fills my soul? All I have said and done has then been in vain! Instead of having won your esteem, your majesty distrusts me, and believes the follies of the imagination in sleep rather than the protestations of reason, interest, and friendship!"

"No, no," said Napoleon, affectionately, and almost touched by the profound grief depicted in Alexander's countenance, "I believe that your majesty returns a little the love I feel for you. I believe in your noble heart, in spite of all dreams."

"And I swear to your majesty that you may believe in me," exclaimed Alexander. "My whole policy, the new course upon which I have entered, will prove to you, more convincingly than words, sire, that I am most anxious to establish a firm alliance between Russia and France; oh, believe me, sire, I gladly acknowledge you as my superior; all promptings of jealousy are extinct in my heart; and when, in the face of the enormous territorial aggrandizements of France, I desire an enlargement of Russia, too, I do so not for my sake, but in order to satisfy my people, that they may bear more patiently your operations in Spain. For my part, I approve all you have done in that country. King Charles and his son Ferdinand have abundantly deserved their present fate by their incapacity and baseness, and I do not pity them. But one must comprehend the system of the great Napoleon as clearly and thoroughly as I do, to be able to pass over the great catastrophes which your majesty has caused the world to witness. My people, and, above all, my nobility, have not yet progressed so far as that, and hence the attention of the Russians should be turned to important changes in the Orient that they may look more indifferently at what you are undertaking in the Occident. As for myself, I am your most faithful friend, and I have proved it to your majesty by becoming the enemy of your enemies. In accordance with your wishes, I have declared war against England, and shall probably soon have to do the same against Austria, for I shall require her in the most energetic manner to explain why she is secretly arming; and, if her explanations should not be satisfactory, draw the sword against her. Then, I suppose, your majesty will believe in my friendship?"

"Oh, I believe in it now," exclaimed Napoleon, pressing the proffered hand of Alexander. "For this friendship is my hope. United, we shall be able to carry out the grand schemes which we formed at Tilsit. Striding across the world, we shall lay it at our feet, and one day there will be only two thrones; but in the beginning we must proceed carefully. It took the Creator six days to make the world, and each day, most likely, comprehended a vast number of our years. We shall create our world in six years, and then we shall look at it, and pronounce it 'very good.' But caution is indispensable, for our empires labor under many burdens. You are waging war in Finland, and I am doing so in Spain. Prudence advises us not to increase these embarrassments by seeking at this moment for Russia an aggrandizement which would fill the world with astonishment, and reëcho like a war-cry throughout Europe. Let the dissolution of Turkey and her annexation to Russia be the keystone of our creation, the last work of the sixth day. Let us erect the new empires on solid foundations, which all the storms of this world may not shake!"

"When Constantinople is mine, I shall not be afraid," exclaimed Alexander, ardently.

"Constantinople belongs to the sixth day of creation," said Napoleon, "but we are only at the second. Tilsit was the first, Erfurt is the second."

"And on the second day you take from me what you promised on the first?" asked Alexander, whose brow was losing its serenity.

"No, I only want to secure it to you," said Napoleon—"to give a firm base to the edifice of our future. If your majesty should take possession of Turkey to-day, one-half of Europe would arm to-morrow to take it from you, and at this moment Russia is unable to brave so many enemies. Austria would rise against you, for, whatever offers you might make, she would prefer war to a partition of Turkey. England would see her commerce endangered, and enter into the contest from calculations of self-interest. Besides, Turkey herself would wage war with the fanaticism of her menaced nationality. Where are the armies which your majesty could oppose to the united forces of England, Austria, and Turkey? It is true, you have an army on the Danube, sufficiently strong to oppose Turkey, but too weak if the whole nation should rise. Your principal army is in Finland, and you have no troops to war against Austria. I alone, therefore—for, as a matter of course, I shall remain your faithful ally—I should have to struggle with Austria, England, Spain, and, perhaps, with the whole of Germany. To be sure, I might do so, for I have sufficient power to cope with all my enemies. But would it be wise to enter at once into enterprises so vast? And what for? To pursue a chimerical project which, how grand soever it may be, is not attainable at this time."

"Alas!" sighed Alexander, "I see that your majesty is right, and that mountain difficulties rise between me and my cherished project! I shall have to return empty-handed to my ancestors, and when Peter the Great asks me, "What have you done to fulfil my will? Where are the provinces that you have added to my empire?' I must hang my head in confusion and say that—"

"No," exclaimed Napoleon, in a loud and solemn voice; "you will proudly raise your head and reply: 'Look at Russia! I have made her great at home and abroad. I have given to my people civilization and culture, and added to my empire new provinces which promote its greatness and power more substantially than Constantinople itself would have done. The possession of that city is a dream. I have annexed to my country real provinces.' That is what you will reply to your great ancestor, sire, provided you go to him before having arrived at your sixth day of creation."

Alexander was speechless for a moment, as if fascinated by Napoleon's countenance, beaming with energy and determination.

"What provinces does your majesty allude to?" he asked, dreamily.

"They lie at the feet of Russia, and seem only to wait for your majesty to pick them up. Moldavia and Wallachia you will present as new crown jewels to your empire. They are substantial realities in place of visionary wishes; solid possessions far more important than Constantinople."

"That is true," exclaimed Alexander. "I have myself thought so for a long time, but I dare not avow it, because I was afraid your majesty would not agree with me."

"France knows no envy," said the emperor, "and Napoleon loves his friend Alexander; he will gladly grant to him what he desires, and what is attainable. Take Moldavia and Wallachia, sire!"

"You grant them to me," exclaimed Alexander, "and it is no empty promise, but a definite and immutable agreement?"

"I say, sire, take them at once, and woe to those who would dare touch your new possessions!"

"I thank you, sire," Alexander said. "You have given me a proof of your friendship to-day, and old Romanzoff will have to acknowledge that he is wrong in thinking that you only intended to amuse us with idle promises. Ah, he is a hard head, and I believe your Minister Champagny cannot get along with him very well."

"That is so," exclaimed Napoleon, laughing, and Alexander joined heartily in his mirth.

"He will now demand guaranties," said Alexander, still laughing. "He is so distrustful that he believes in no words, though from heaven. My old Romanzoff believes only in black and white."

"We will so guarantee Moldavia to him," said Napoleon.

"Oh, not for my sake," exclaimed Alexander, carelessly. "Your majesty's word is amply sufficient for me; let Romanzoff and Champagny quarrel about the formalities."

"I will come to the assistance of poor Champagny," said Napoleon, "if your majesty, in return, will be kind enough to make stubborn Romanzoff somewhat more tractable. You have already occupied these provinces; it will, therefore, be easy for you to annex them. France will give her consent by a formal treaty, and not only engage to recognize this annexation so far as she herself is concerned, but also to compel Turkey, Austria, and England, to acknowledge it. Your majesty, therefore, will break the armistice with Turkey, and advance your army to the foot of the Balkan, then to Adrianople, and, if need be, to Constantinople, in order to wrest these territories from the Porte. In case Austria should intervene, we shall both declare war against her. As for England, we are already at war with her. It will only be necessary for me to give her a bloody defeat in Spain to render her insensible to any enterprises we may enter into on the continent. All this we stipulate not only verbally, but in writing. Will that satisfy your majesty?"

"Me? I am satisfied with your majesty's word," exclaimed Alexander.

"Well, then," said Napoleon, with a smile, "the question is, Will your minister be satisfied?"

"Of course, he will; and, moreover, I shall command him to raise no further objections. Let Champagny and Romanzoff draw up the treaty; it will then be merely necessary for us to sign it, and the whole matter is settled. Our friendship will have been rendered more intimate and lasting by new bonds, which nothing in the world will be able to break."

"As to our other plans," said Napoleon, "we shall never lose sight of them. Every day we draw nearer to their fulfilment. There is yet a vast future before us in which to accomplish our purposes with regard to the Orient, and to remodel its political affairs. Romanzoff is aged, and hence, impatient to enjoy what he desires. But you are young: you can wait."

"Romanzoff is a Russian of the old school," said Alexander, smiling. "He has passions and inclinations from which I am free. I attach a higher value to civilizing than enlarging my empire. Hence, I desire the provinces of the Danube more for my nation than for myself. I shall be able to wait patiently until our plans can be carried into effect. But you, my noble friend, you ought to enjoy in tranquillity the great things which you have accomplished, and no longer expose yourself to the danger of war. Have you not obtained glory and power enough? Alexander and Cæsar gained no more laurels than you! Be happy, and let us leave the execution of our projects to the future."

"Yes, let us do so," replied Napoleon. "I am also longing for repose. I am tired of conquest; it has charms for me no longer, and battle-fields seem to me what they are—the graveyards of brave men prematurely taken from their country and their families. No more war! Peace with the whole world, made more desirable by the friendship of Alexander!" He offered his hand with that smile which no one could withstand. "Oh!" he continued, "I am so happy at having at length arrived at an understanding with you, and strengthened our alliance, that I wish your majesty had some desire that I might grant, and which it would be difficult for me to fulfil. Is there nothing at all that you could demand of me?"

"Yes, sire, there is," responded Alexander, "and I have both a wish and a prayer to address your majesty. Sire, my ally, the poor King of Prussia, and his noble consort, are still living in exile. I saw them, with your consent, on passing through Königsberg, and confess that I promised to intercede for them, and procure an alleviation of their unfortunate condition."

"An alleviation of their unfortunate condition!" exclaimed Napoleon, frowning. "Do they not owe their present fate entirely to themselves? Why do they not pay punctually the contributions which I have imposed upon them?"

"Sire, because they cannot! Prussia, exhausted, and reduced to one-half of her former territory, is unable to pay war contributions amounting to one hundred and fifty millions of dollars, in the short space of two years, and to feed, besides, a French army of forty thousand men. Your majesty ought to be magnanimous, and restore at least a semblance of independence to my poor ally, by putting an end to the occupation."

"If I do so, Prussia would think no longer of fulfilling her obligations to me," exclaimed Napoleon. "Instead of paying the war contributions, she would be foolish enough to rise in open hostility against me. Queen Louisa hates me; she will never cease to intrigue against me, and to instigate her husband to pursue a course hostile to me. She surrounds herself and her husband by men who share her sentiments, and are plotting to revolutionize Prussia—nay, all Germany. There is, for instance, a certain Baron von Stein, whom the king appointed minister at the request of the queen, and who is nothing but a tool in the hands of this intriguing woman. That Stein is a bad and dangerous man; he is at the head of secret societies, and I shall immediately take steps to render him harmless. He and the queen alone make Prussia oppose me, and refuse paying the stipulated contributions."

"Sire," said Alexander, almost imploringly, "I repeat to your majesty, Prussia is unable to pay the enormous amount which has even been increased after the conclusion of the treaty of Tilsit, and, moreover, in the short space of two years. Oh, your majesty, the fate of the royal family of Prussia is truly pitiable and weighs down my soul with remorse. Do for my sake what you are unwilling to do for the sake of Prussia. Let me not return without consolation to that mourning royal family. Let me enjoy the triumph of proving to them that my words and intercession were able to obtain from your majesty what neither the queen's letter, nor all the solicitations of Prince William, and of the Prussian diplomatists, had been able to accomplish! Oh, sire, you see I am vain, and would like to demonstrate your friendship for me."

Napoleon's countenance grew milder while Alexander was impressively uttering these words. "Sire," he said, "who could withstand your grace and magnanimity? I wished a few minutes ago to be allowed to grant you some request, difficult for me to fulfil, in order to give you a proof of my regard! Well, your majesty has really asked something very difficult for me to grant. But I will comply for your sake, sire! I will deduct twenty millions from the sum to be paid by Prussia, extend the time in which the contributions are to be paid from two to three years, and withdraw my troops and officials in the course of six months. Is your majesty satisfied with this, and will you regard it as a proof of my friendship?"

"It is a proof of your friendship and generosity, and I thank your majesty," exclaimed Alexander. Oh, how happy I shall be when on my return I announce these glad tidings to the royal couple! Ah, my poor allies have suffered a great deal, and if your majesty does not object, I should like to

invite King Frederick William and his consort, next winter, to spend a few weeks at St. Petersburg. Does your majesty approve?"

Napoleon cast a quick and searching glance at Alexander. "I do not assume to decide whom your majesty should hospitably receive," he said, "and I confide in your friendship—you are henceforth my ally. Get the King of Prussia to join this alliance, as the latter induced you to join the alliance against me; that would indeed greatly promote the welfare of Frederick William, and put an end to the intrigues of his queen. But now, sire, a truce to politics and business! We are agreed and shall be united in peace as in war. Our business is accomplished, and the days we still spend here must be exclusively devoted to pleasure and friendly intercourse. The Duke of Weimar would like to receive us for a few days at his capital, to arrange a chase and a ball. Suppose we go thither this afternoon and spend two days? Would it be agreeable to you?"

"I would accompany your majesty anywhere, were it into Orcus," exclaimed Alexander. "Let us go to Weimar!"

"And if you please, sire, to Jena also. I should like to show the battle-field to your majesty."

"And I should like to learn from your majesty how to win such laurels. I follow you as a pupil."

CHAPTER XLII.

NAPOLEON AND GOETHE.

On his return from the early visit he had paid to the Emperor of Russia, Napoleon immediately went to his cabinet and sent for Minister Champagny, whom he met with unusual animation; and now, that he deemed it no longer necessary to mask his countenance, it was beaming with joy. "Champagny," he said, "it will be no longer necessary for you to send letters to me. The emperor Alexander has accepted my offers, and Romanzoff will have to hang up his 'cat's tongue' in the smoke-house. For the present the appetite of the Russian Emperor for new territories has been satisfied with the provinces of the Danube, and he will compel his minister to yield. The stubborn old fellow will have to give way, but, we are obliged to give him our promises in black and white. I go this afternoon with the emperor to Weimar to spend a few days. You may in the mean time carry on the negotiations with Romanzoff and draw up the treaty. I shall send you further instructions to-night."

"And will not your majesty be kind enough to give me also instructions as to the course I am to pursue toward the Austrian ambassador, Count Vincent?" said the minister. "He overwhelms me every day with questions and demands. He is very anxious to obtain an interview with your majesty, to learn from your own lips that Austria has nothing to fear from France, and that your majesty believes in the sincerity of the friendship and devotedness of his master."

"I believe in the sincerity of Austria!" exclaimed Napoleon, frowning. "I know her perfidy; I know that she is secretly arming to attack me as soon as she believes me to be embarrassed by the events in Spain. But I will unmask these hypocrites, and meet them with open visor. I will wage war against them, because they disdain to remain at peace with me. Now that I am sure of Russia, I am no longer afraid of Austria, for Russia will assist me in the war against her, or at least not prevent me from attacking and punishing her for her insolence. It was in my power to overthrow that monarchy as I have overthrown those of Naples and Spain. I refrained, and Austria is indebted to me for her existence. Now, however, I am inexorable, and when I once more make my entry into Vienna, it will be as dictator prescribing laws to the vanquished. Austria is arming, and France will arm for another Austerlitz. I authorize you to repeat these words to Count Vincent. I myself will write to his emperor and intrust my letter to the ambassador. Tell him so." He dismissed the minister and repaired to the dining-room.

Breakfast was ready, and had been served on a round table in the middle of the room. Talleyrand, Berthier, Savary, and Daru, received the emperor, and accompanied him to the table, not to participate in the repast, but to converse with him, as Napoleon liked to do while he was eating, and to reply to the questions which he addressed now to one, now to another.

"Well, Daru," he asked, taking his seat, "you come from Berlin? What about the payment of the contributions?"

"Ah, sire, the prospects are very discouraging," said Daru, shrugging his shoulders. "More rigorous measures will probably become necessary to coerce those stubborn Prussians, and—"

The door opened, and Constant, the *valet de chambre*, entered, whispering a few words to Marshal Berthier.

The marshal approached the emperor, who was engaged with the wing of a chicken. "Sire," he

said, "your majesty ordered M. von Goethe to appear before you at this hour. He is in the anteroom."

"Ah, M. von Goethe, the great German poet, the author of the 'Sorrows of Werther,'" exclaimed Napoleon. "Let him come in immediately." A moment later Constant announced M. von Goethe. Napoleon was still sitting at the table; Talleyrand was standing at his right; Daru, Savary, and Berthier, at his left. The eyes of all turned toward the door, where appeared a gentleman of high, dignified bearing. He was tall and vigorous, like a German oak; the head of a Jupiter surmounted his broad shoulders and chest. Time, with its wrinkling hand, had tried in vain to deform the imperishable beauty of that countenance; age could not touch the charm and dignity of his features; the grace of youth still played on his classic lips, and the ardor of a young heart was beaming from his dark eyes as they looked calmly at the emperor.

Napoleon, continuing to eat, beckoned Goethe, with a careless wave of his hand, to approach. He complied, and stood in front of the table, opposite the emperor, who looked up, and, turning with an expression of surprise to Talleyrand, pointed to Goethe, and exclaimed, "Ah, that is a man!"* An imperceptible smile overspread the poet's countenance, and he bowed in silence.

"How old are you, M. von Goethe?" asked Napoleon.

"Sire, I am in my sixtieth year."

"In your sixtieth year, and yet you have the appearance of a youth! Ah, it is evident that perpetual intercourse with the muses has imparted external youth to you."

"Sire, that is true," exclaimed Daru, "the muse of Goethe is that of youth, beauty, and grace. Germany justly calls him her greatest poet, and does homage with well-grounded enthusiasm to the author of 'Faust,' of 'Werther,' and of so many other master-pieces."

"I believe you have also written tragedies?" asked Napoleon.

"Sire, I have made some attempts," replied Goethe, smiling. "But the applause of my countrymen cannot blind me as to the real value of my dramas. I believe it is very difficult, if not impossible, for a German poet to write real tragedies, which fulfil the higher requirements of art, and withal those of the stage. I must confess that my tragedies are not so adapted."

"Sire," said Daru, "M. von Goethe has also translated Voltaire's 'Mohammed.'"

"That is not a good tragedy," said Napoleon. "Voltaire has sinned against history and the human heart. He has prostituted the character of Mohammed by petty intrigues. He makes a man, who revolutionized the world, act like an infamous criminal deserving the gallows. Let us rather speak of Goethe's own work—of the 'Sorrows of Werther.' I have read it many times, and it has always afforded me the highest enjoyment; it accompanied me to Egypt, and during my campaigns in Italy, and it is therefore but just that I should return thanks to the poet for the many pleasant hours he has afforded me."

"Sire, your majesty, at this moment, amply rewards me," said Goethe, bowing slightly.

"Your 'Werther' is indeed a work full of the most exalted ideas," added Napoleon; "it contains noble views of life, and depicts the weariness and disgust which all high-minded characters must feel on being forced to leave their sphere and come in contact with the gross world. You have described the sufferings of your hero with irresistible eloquence, and never, perhaps, has a poet made a more artistic analysis of love. Let me tell you, however, that you have not been entirely consistent in the work. You make your hero die not only of love, but of wounded ambition, and you mention expressly that the injustice he met with at the hands of his official superiors was a wound always bleeding, of which he suffered even in the presence of the lady whom he loved so passionately. That is not quite natural, and weakens in the mind of the reader the comprehension of that influence which love exerted on Werther. Why did you do so?"

Goethe looked almost in astonishment at the emperor; this unexpected censure, and the quick, categorical question, had equally surprised him, and momentarily disturbed the calmness of the poet. "Sire," he said, after a brief pause, "your majesty has found fault with something with which no one has reproached me heretofore, and I confess that your criticism has struck me. But it is just, and I deserve it. However, a poet may be pardoned for using an artifice which cannot easily be detected, in order to produce a certain effect that he believes he is unable to bring about in a simple and natural way."

Napoleon nodded assentingly. "Your 'Werther' is a drama of the heart, and there are none to be compared with it," he said. "After reading it, I am persuaded that it is your voçation to write

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* "*Voilà un homme!*" These words created a great sensation at the time, and were highly appreciated by the admirers of Goethe, as well as by the great poet himself. His correspondence with friends contains numerous allusions to them.—Vide "Riemer's Letters to and from Goethe," p. 325.

in this style; for the tragic muse is the favorite companion of the greatest poet. Tragedy was at all times the school of great men. It is the duty of sovereigns to encourage, patronize, and reward it. In order to appreciate it correctly, we need not be poets ourselves; we only need knowledge of human nature, of life, and of a cultivated mind. Tragedy fires the heart, elevates the soul, and can or rather must create heroes. I am convinced that France is indebted to the works of Corneille for many of her greatest men. If he were living I would make a prince of him."

"Your majesty, by your words, has just adorned his memory with the coronet of a prince," said Goethe. "Corneille would assuredly have deserved it, for he was a poet in the noblest sense, and imbued with the ideas and principles of modern civilization. He never makes his heroes die in consequence of a decree of fate, but they always bear in themselves the germ of their ruin or death; it is a natural, rational death, not an artificial one."

"Let us say no more about the ancients and their fatalism," exclaimed Napoleon; "they belong to a darker age. Political supremacy is our modern fatalism, and our tragedies must be the school of politicians and statesmen. That is the highest summit which poets are able to reach. You, for instance, ought to write the death of Cæsar; it seems to me you could present a much more exalted view of it than Voltaire did. That might become the noblest task of your life. It ought to be proved to the world how happy and prosperous Cæsar would have made it if time had been given him to carry his comprehensive plans into effect. What do you think of it, M. von Goethe?"

"Sire," said Goethe, with a polite smile, "I should prefer to write the life and career of Cæsar, and in doing so I should not be at a loss for a model." His eyes met those of the emperor, and they well understood each other. Both of them smiled.

"You ought to go to Paris," exclaimed Napoleon. "I insist on your doing so. There you will find abundant matter for your muse."

"Your majesty provides the poets of the present time, wherever they may be, with abundant matter," said Goethe, not in the tone of a courtier, but with the tranquillity of a prince who confers a favor.

"You must go to Paris," repeated Napoleon. "We shall meet again."

Goethe, who was an experienced courtier, understood the delicate hint, and stepped back from the table. Napoleon addressed a question to Marshal Soult, who entered at this moment. The poet withdrew without further ceremony. The eyes of the emperor followed the tall, proud figure, and turning to Berthier, he repeated his exclamation, "*Voilà un homme!*"

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE CHASE AND THE ASSASSINS.

The two emperors made their entry into the decorated city of Weimar amidst pealing bells, and the cheers of the people. The Duchess of Weimar, just as she had done two years before, received the French conqueror at the head of the palace staircase; this time, however, she was not alone, but her husband, whom the emperor had formerly hated and reviled so bitterly, stood at her side. Napoleon greeted the ducal couple with his most winning smile.

The events of those terrible days of the past had been well-nigh forgotten. A short time had sufficed to veil their memory, and Napoleon was a welcome and highly-honored guest two years after the battle of Jena. No vestige of the former distress remained; but the laurels of the victor had not withered.

A vast number of carriages, horsemen, and pedestrians, filled the streets. The whole country had sent its representatives to greet the emperors. All the houses were ornamented with flags, festoons, busts, and laudatory inscriptions. But no one cared to stay at home. The inhabitants and strangers hastened to the forest of Ettersburg, to witness the great chase which the Duke of Weimar had arranged in honor of the imperial guests. —Several hundred deer had been driven up and fenced in, close to the large clearing which was to be the scene of this day's festivities. In the middle rose a huge hunting-pavilion, the roof of which rested on pillars twined with flowers. Here the two emperors were to witness the chase, and the two wings of the structure were assigned to the kings, dukes, and princes. All eyes and thoughts, therefore, were turned in that direction; and yet no one noticed particularly two youthful forms, wrapped in cloaks and leaning against an oak near the gamekeepers. The merry clamor and the bugle-calls of the hunters drowned the conversation of these young men. No one was surprised at seeing rifles in their hands; they might be hunters or gamekeepers—who could tell?

"I believe," said one of them, in a whisper, "we shall accomplish nothing. My rifle does not

carry far enough to hit him, and we are not allowed to approach nearer."

"It is impossible to take a sure aim from here," replied the other. "My eye does not reach so far; I could fire only at random into the pavilion."

"The order says, however, to strike him alone, and not to endanger other lives," said the first speaker. "The president said, if we kill him, it would be an act of justice; but if we are so unfortunate as to kill another, it would be murder."

"Oh, what sophistries to lull the warning voice of conscience!" murmured the second speaker; "I—"

Loud cheers interrupted him; the notes of bugles and the roll of drums mingled with the general uproar. The people seemed wild with excitement, and the deer in the enclosure huddled together in terror. The two emperors with their suites had just arrived.

"Look at him, brother," whispered the young man to his companion; "look at the weird contrast of his gloomy countenance with the merry faces around him. He stands like some incarnate spirit of evil in the midst of laughing fools."

"Yes, but he is himself merry, brother Alfred, or seems to be," said his companion.

"The groans of poor Germania are not heard in the flatteries of her princes, who are fawning around him, and guarding him so well that the hand of a true German cannot reach him."

"But the sword is hanging over him, brother Conrad," said Alfred, "and if it do not fall on him to-day, it will to-morrow. Let us wait and watch for an opportunity."

"Yes, Alfred, let us wait. We know not what favorable chance may aid us."

The chase commenced; amidst deafening shouts the game were driven from the enclosure. Whenever a deer passed near the pavilion, the two emperors fired, and when the noble animal fell at perhaps ten yards' distance, the spectators cheered, the bugles sounded, and the two imperial sportsmen congratulated each other on their skill.

"It is in vain to stand here any longer," said Conrad, impatiently. "We shall be unable to reach him, and it is repugnant to my feelings to witness this butchery."

"Let us go, brother," whispered Alfred. "We must try to find another opportunity. Let us reflect. Do you know the programme of the day's festivities?"

"I do. After the chase there will be a gala-dinner, and the sovereigns will then ride to the theatre, where the 'Death of Cæsar' will be performed. After the representation of the tragedy, there will be a grand supper and ball at the palace."

"The 'Death of Cæsar?'" asked Conrad, musingly. "Does fate intend giving us a hint thereby? Does it show us where to find him and to strike the blow? Let us be the actors in a similar play, and perform our part at the entrance of the theatre! Are you ready, brother?"

"I am ready," replied Alfred, sighing. "We have sworn to do every thing the league orders us to do—we must obey."

"Yes," said Conrad, sighing, "obey or die. Let us take our daggers to-night, and use them well. Let us place ourselves in front of the theatre, you on the right, and myself on the left. We must strike at the same time, when he alights from his carriage. While all are gazing at him, let us stealthily slip through the crowd. When you hear me shout 'One,' you will shout 'Two!' We will then simultaneously rush forward."

"At what time do we meet?"

"At seven o'clock, and if we escape death and arrest, we shall meet again at the tavern outside the gate. Farewell, brother Alfred!"

"Farewell, brother Conrad!"

On the same evening, a thousand lights illuminated Weimar. That part of the city between the palace and the theatre, where the emperors would pass, was especially brilliant. When after the chase they had withdrawn to rest a little, and the high dignitaries of the court were waiting in the large reception-halls, Grand-Marshal Duroc approached General von Müffling, who had left the Russian service; he was now vice-president in Weimar, and had been charged by the duke with the supervision of the court festivities.

"Tell me, sir," said Duroc, in a low voice, "I suppose you have a good police here?"

"Of course, we have," replied Müffling, smiling, "that is to say, we have a police to attend to sweeping the chimneys and cleaning the streets, but as to a *haute police*, we still live in a state of perfect innocence."

"The emperor, then, is to go to the theatre, and your police have taken no precautions for his safety?" asked Duroc, anxiously.

"I believe it is so, M. Grand Marshal. If you wish to make any arrangements, pray do so, and I shall approve them."

"Thank you," said Duroc, bowing. "I have secretly sent for a brigade of French gendarmes. Will you permit them to guard the doors of the theatre, and keep the populace from the streets along which the emperors will ride?"

"Do as you please, M. Grand Marshal," said General von Müffling, with a slightly sarcastic smile. "A detachment of the imperial guard will be drawn up in front of the theatre, and hence I deemed any further precautions entirely superfluous."

"The grenadiers are posted there only as a guard of honor," said Duroc; "I hasten to send the gendarmes thither."

Fifteen minutes afterward the whole route from the palace to the theatre was guarded by gendarmes, who pushed back all who tried to cross the narrow sidewalks, or to step into the street along which the carriages were rolling. A double line of grenadiers was drawn up in front of the theatre. An officer walked up and down, gazing anxiously along the street, in order to command the drummers to beat according to the rank of the sovereigns arriving. For the emperors they were to roll thrice, for the kings twice, and but once for the sovereign dukes and princes. The drummers had just rolled three times, for the Emperor Alexander had arrived. Another magnificent carriage approached; the coachman on the box was covered with gold lace, and two runners, entirely clad in gold brocade, accompanied. Two rolls had already been beaten, a third was about to commence, when the commanding officer waved his hand angrily, and shouted, "Silence! It is only a king!" The stout form of the King of Würtemberg appeared, and hastened into the theatre. Another carriage approached. The drummers beat louder than before. Once, twice! And then a third roll. The grenadiers presented arms, and the people rushed forward. It was the Emperor Napoleon.

At this moment a young man elbowed himself through the crowd. He was already close to the emperor. Only a single gendarme was in front of him.

"One!" he shouted in a ringing voice, pushing aside the gendarme. "One!" he repeated. No voice replied.

"Stand back!" cried the guard.

The emperor walked past. He had heard the shout. At the door he turned his stern face, while his eyes flashed for a moment searchingly over the crowd. He then slowly walked on. No accident disturbed the representation, and the daggers that had been lurking outside for the modern Cæsar had failed to strike him.

On the same evening the two conspirators met at the place agreed on. With disappointed faces they seemed to read each other's secret thoughts.

"Why did you not reply to me, brother?" asked Conrad. "Why were you silent when I gave the signal?"

"I was unable to get through the crowd," said Alfred. "The gendarmes refused to let me pass, and it appeared to me they were eying me suspiciously. It was impossible to penetrate to the spot indicated. I heard you call, but could not reply; I was too far from you."

"The work, then, must be done to-morrow," said Conrad, gravely and sadly.

"Remember, brother, that the order of the president was to strike the blow within a week. To-morrow is the last day!"

"Yes, to-morrow we must desecrate the sacred cause of the fatherland by an assassination," said Alfred, sighing. "But we have sworn not to shrink from death if the league requires it, and must obey!"

"We must obey or die," murmured Conrad. "Do you know the programme of to-morrow?"

"I do, brother. Napoleon wishes to show the battle-field of Jena to the Emperor Alexander, and to the kings and princes; and the Duke of Weimar, who participated in the battle at the head of a Prussian division, has arranged, in harmless self-irony, a hare-hunt. That will be a highly dignified celebration of the anniversary of that battle."

"Oh, Germania! how thou must suffer!" groaned Conrad. "It is time for us to place a bloody offering on thy altar! It must be done to-morrow. The road to Jena crosses the small forest of the Webicht. Let us place ourselves there close to the road, armed with our muskets. One of their balls will surely hit him. We must both shoot at the same time."

"To-morrow, then, in the forest of the Webicht!"

On the following day the imperial and royal visitors repaired to Jena, in order to hunt hares on the battle-field of Napoleon's famous victory. On the Landgrafenberg, where Napoleon two years ago had spent the night before the battle at a bivouac-fire, a magnificent tent had been erected, and the Duke of Weimar begged leave to call it henceforth "Napoleonsberg." Napoleon granted the request, smilingly, and then asked the company to take a walk with him across the battle-field, that he might explain to them the various operations of the great struggle. This request of course was received with general joy, and the party descended into the valley. Napoleon led the way; on his right Alexander, on his left Prince William of Prussia, whom he had taken care to have by his side. All listened in breathless silence to his words,

which were growing more and more enthusiastic. He disclosed to his audience his own plans and motives, as well as the disastrous dispositions of his enemies. Alexander listened to him musingly; the German kings and princes, in breathless suspense. The French marshals, however, looked discontented while their sovereign was speaking. Once, when the emperor was just expatiating in glowing words on the correct mode of warfare, his eyes happened to meet the countenance of Berthier, Prince of Neufchatel, and noticed the dissatisfied expression of his features.

When Napoleon repaired to his tent, he ordered Marshal Berthier to follow him. "Berthier, why did you look so angry?"

"Sire," faltered Berthier, in confusion, "I do not know that I did."

"But I know it. Why were you dissatisfied. Speak! I command you!"

"Well, if your majesty insists, I will speak," exclaimed Berthier. "Your majesty apparently forgot what you have repeated to us so often: that we ought always to treat our allies as though they afterward might become our enemies. Is your majesty not afraid lest the sovereigns should profit hereafter by the excellent lessons given them to-day?"

The emperor smiled. "Berthier," he said, kindly, "that is truly a bold rebuke, and hence I like it. I believe you take me for a babbler. You think, then, Prince of Neufchatel," he added, bending over Berthier and pulling his ear, "that I have put whips into the hands of the German princes which they might use against us! Be not alarmed; I do not tell them every thing." And Napoleon opened the door of the tent with a laugh, and gave the signal for the hunt to begin.

Not a human voice was to be heard in the forest of Webicht, which was generally much frequented. It was but a bird's song that broke the deep silence. Suddenly there was a rustling noise in the autumnal leaves covering the ground, and quick footsteps approached the road crossing the middle of the forest. Two young men, wrapped in cloaks, glided through the woods, and stationed themselves behind a couple of large beeches. They looked searchingly along the road; opened their cloaks, and raised their weapons to examine them, that they might make sure work.

"All right," said Conrad.

"All right," echoed Alfred.

"When I call out 'One,' we must both fire!"

"Yes, but we have been ordered to kill none but him," said Alfred, hesitatingly. "What if he does not ride alone? If one of the balls should strike an innocent man?"

"If one of his marshals or adjutants sits beside him he would not be an innocent man, for he has assisted in making our country unhappy! Let German soil drink his blood! He must not prevent us from carrying out our purpose. We cannot shrink from it, because we have sworn obedience to the league, and this is the last day. We must do or die!"

"Hush! let us listen and watch for him, brother Conrad." Soon the roll of wheels was heard. The two conspirators raised their muskets as the carriage approached. It could be seen that it contained two persons.

"It is he," whispered Alfred. "But who is seated by his side?"

"One of his adjutants," said Conrad; "no matter! Let us aim, brother." The large trunks of the beeches concealed the forms of the conspirators.

"When I command, we fire!" whispered Conrad.

So close were they now that the persons seated in the coach could be recognized. The man sitting on the right was Napoleon. But who was the young man with the fine but downcast face?

"Stop," whispered Alfred. "Do not shoot, brother! He is no Frenchman! He is a German prince, the brother of the King of Prussia! We cannot fire!"

"No, we must not fire at the brother of the unfortunate King of Prussia!" murmured Conrad, lowering his arm. As the carriage passed by, the conspirators could distinctly hear the words of Napoleon and his companion. "A fine, fragrant forest," said the former, in his sonorous voice, "just the thing for German poets and dreamers. For I suppose, prince, the Germans like to dream?"

"Sire," said Prince William, mournfully, "I believe your majesty has at last disturbed them in their visionary musings."

Napoleon burst into laughter, which resounded through the forest, and startled the pale men standing behind the trees, and gazing gloomily after him. He chatted gayly beside Prince William, without suspecting that he, the brother of the King of Prussia, whom Napoleon had humbled so often and so grievously, had just saved his life.

"We have failed again," said Alfred, when the noise of the wheels was dying away in the distance. "The last day is nearly gone. What shall we reply to the brethren when they ask us how we have carried out the order which our country sent us? What shall we reply when they call us to account?"

"We shall tell them that Heaven refused to

allow the sacred cause of Germany to be desecrated by murder!" exclaimed Conrad, gravely; "that, faithful to our obligation, although with reluctant hearts, we tried to accomplish our mission, but that we were restrained and our strength was paralyzed. You will tell them so, brother—you alone. Tell them that I was not forgetful of the oath I took on the day I joined the league. Having been unable to obey, I die! Farewell, brother!" A shot reëchoed in the silent forest.

Not long after, a man, with livid cheeks and wild eyes, might have been seen hastening across the distant heath on the other side of the woods. As he ran he whispered, "Unhappy Germany!" These were the last words of his companion Conrad, who lay dead on the fallen leaves.

Two days after their return from Weimar, on the 10th of October, the emperors signed the treaty about which they had agreed, and in which Romanzoff had been obliged to acquiesce. France consented in this treaty that Russia should take possession of Moldavia and Wallachia. Russia also agreed to whatever changes Napoleon had made, and would hereafter make, in regard to the government of Spain, and engaged to assist him in a war against Austria.

On the 14th of October they left Erfurt, and returned to their states. The object of their meeting had been attained; both had derived benefit from it. Alexander had gained Moldavia and Wallachia; Napoleon, a powerful friend and ally. Europe received tremblingly the news of this alliance of the West and the East. What hopes remained to Germany!—to that dismembered country, over whose battle-fields Russia and France had joined hands and concerted measures against the most powerful of its states—Austria!

BOOK VI.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE WAR WITH AUSTRIA.

NAPOLEON, in ill-humor, was pacing his cabinet, while Minister Champagny was standing at the large desk, covered with papers and maps, where he was engaged in folding and arranging several documents.

"They are bent on having war, those insolent Austrians," said Napoleon, after a pause, "and they want it now, because they believe that I am not prepared for it. What an unheard-of presumption, to arrest my couriers, and take their papers from them! And now that I am taking reprisals—that I on my part have issued orders to arrest their couriers on all highways, and in all cities, and to take their papers from them, the Austrians are raising a hue-and-cry about the violation of international law; and if war should break out, the blame, as usual, will be laid at my door!" He paused, but added immediately:

"I wished to remain at peace with Germany for the present, for I have enough to do with those wretched Spaniards, who are rising against my troops like a vast band of guerillas. But that is just what is giving the Austrians courage. They believe me to be weakened, isolated, and unable to wage war with any other power, and hence the cowards take heart, and think they can obtain spoils from the lion. But, patience! the lion retains his former strength and vigor, and will finally destroy his enemies. Champagny, I suppose you have already sent the Austrian ambassador his passports?"

"Yes, sire, Count Metternich has departed with all the members of his legation."

"Very well; let him go to Vienna and announce my speedy arrival to the Emperor Francis," exclaimed Napoleon, impatiently.

"Sire, Count Metternich will meet the emperor no longer in Vienna," said Champagny, calmly.

"No longer in Vienna!" exclaimed Napoleon, laughing scornfully. "Does Francis II. suspect already that I am about to come, and has he taken to his heels even before I have left Paris?"

"No, sire; it seems, on the contrary, that the Emperor Francis intends to put himself at the head of his troops."

Napoleon burst into a loud laugh. "The Austrians, then, believe my soldiers to be sparrows, and think they can drive them out by setting up a scarecrow! If the Emperor Francis himself intends to command, he will command the army only to retreat, for the word 'forward' is not to be found in his dictionary. Have you looked over the dispatches from Germany, and can you report to me what they contain?"

"I am ready, sire," said Champagny, glancing at the papers.

"Then commence," ordered the emperor, sitting down, and taking from the table a penknife, with which he whittled the back of the chair.

"The four corps of the Austrian army, with the two reserve corps, moved on the first of April toward the frontier of Bavaria," said Champagny.

"As soon as they cross the Inn and enter the territory of my ally, war will break out," exclaimed Napoleon. "Proceed!"

"On the evening of the 9th of April, the Archduke Charles and his brother, the emperor, arrived with the army at Linz. Thence he sent one of his adjutants to the King of Bavaria, to whom was to be delivered an autograph letter, in which the archduke announced to the king that he had received orders to advance, and would regard and treat as enemies all that would resist his progress, no matter whether they were German or foreign troops."

"Why, that is a regular declaration of war,"

said the emperor, piercing the velvet cushion of the chair with his penknife.

"Yes, sire, it is," said Champagny, taking up another paper. "We have received, moreover, a copy of the war manifesto which the Emperor of Austria has published in the *Vienna Court Gazette*, and which was drawn up by Gentz, the well-known pamphleteer."

"Gentz!" ejaculated Napoleon. "Do not those warlike Austrians see that that is their death-knell, and that it is a bad omen for them that Gentz had to blow the war-trumpet? Is it not the same Gentz who drew up the high-sounding manifesto for the King of Prussia, previous to the battle of Jena?"

"Yes, sire, the same."

"Well, that was in 1806; the six has been transformed into a nine—that is all the difference," exclaimed Napoleon. "Every thing else has remained unchanged. I suppose the same language of self-reliance, of a wounded sense of honor, and of noble patriotism, is to be found in the manifesto of 1809 as in that of 1806? Oh, I know it! Those Germans ever remain the same; they always believe their cause just; they always want peace, and find war, without any fault of theirs. Those Austrians have irritated me for about a year past; they have secretly armed during that time. The busier they believed me to be in Spain, the more energetically they continued their preparations; and whenever I had them questioned about their motives and objects, they made evasive and unsatisfactory replies. The natural consequence of all this was, that I moved my troops toward the German frontier; that Davoust, Lannes, and Massena, with three corps, had to approach Austria, and hold themselves in readiness to cross its boundaries when the Austrians enter Bavarian territory; and that, finally, I issued orders to the princes of the Confederation of the Rhine to place their federal quota on a war-footing, and prepare for the outbreak of hostilities. No sooner had this been done, than the Austrians arrested my courier contrary to international law, and compelled me to retaliate. Nevertheless, I suppose, they are entirely innocent now, and the manifesto of the Emperor Francis proves clearly that France, by her incessant insults and encroachments, by her insatiable thirst after new territories, and by her boundless ambition, compelled Austria to take up arms. Is it not so?"

"Yes, sire, it is so. There are at the conclusion of this manifesto words and ideas that are almost identical with those your majesty uttered just now."

"Read this conclusion," said Napoleon, leaning back in his chair.

Champagny read: "The Emperor Francis will never deem himself authorized to meddle with the domestic affairs of foreign states, or to arrogate to himself a controlling influence on their system of government, on their legislative and administrative affairs, or on the development of their military strength. He demands a just reciprocity. Far from being actuated by motives of ambition or jealousy, the emperor will envy no other sovereign his greatness, his glory, his legitimate influence; the exclusive assumption of such advantages alone is the source of general apprehensions and the germ of everlasting wars. Not France, in the preservation and welfare of which his majesty will always take the liveliest interest, but the uninterrupted extension of a system which, under the name of the French Empire, acknowledges no other law in Europe than its own, has brought about the present confusion; it will be removed, and all the wishes of his majesty will be fulfilled, when that exclusive system will be replaced by one of moderation, self-restraint, the reciprocal independence of all the states, respect for the rights of every power, the sacred observance of treaties, and the supremacy of peace. Then alone can the Austrian monarchy and the whole political fabric of Europe be maintained in a prosperous condition."

"Enough!" exclaimed Napoleon, rising from his chair, and throwing the penknife into a distant corner of the room. "I shall pay Austria for this insolence, and there will be a day when the Emperor Francis and his scribbler Gentz will repent of this miserable pamphlet! I will have to treat the former as I have treated the kings of Naples and Spain. The house of the Hapsburgs must cease to reign. Or if, in my patience, I should allow the imperial throne of Austria to exist further under their rule, it shall not be occupied by this dull and obstinate man, but by his brother, the Elector of Würzburg!* But woe to this M. Gentz, who has dared to irritate me anew! Once already I gave orders to arrest and punish him. He succeeded in making his escape. My police will be more cautious this time. When I have made my entry into Vienna, I shall remember M. Gentz! Ah, somebody is coming!"

The door opened, and one of the imperial adjutants entered.

"Sire," he said, handing a sealed letter to Na-

* After Napoleon had made his entry into Vienna, he really requested the Emperor Francis to abdicate in favor of the latter's brother. The battle of Aspern prevented this plan from being carried into effect.

poleon, "the director of the Paris telegraph-office has just brought this."

"At last!" exclaimed Napoleon, seizing the letter, and then motioning him to leave the room.

"At last!" he repeated, breaking the seal. His eyes passed over the paper with an expression of uncontrollable impatience. His countenance brightened, and a faint blush came to his cheeks. He raised his eyes toward the minister. "Champagny," he said, in a joyful voice, "war has commenced; the Austrians have crossed the Inn and invaded the states of my ally the King of Bavaria. The decisive moment is at hand. I shall set out this very night. To-day is the 12th of April; on the 17th I shall be at Donauwörth and put myself at the head of my army. Now let us go to work and make our dispositions.—What is the matter now?"

The door opened again, and the court-marshal appeared on the threshold to announce dinner.

Napoleon cast a hasty glance at the clock. "Indeed, it is six o'clock!" he exclaimed. "But I cannot go yet. Have every thing kept in readiness Tell the empress I wish she would wait for me in the dining-room. I will soon be with her. Send for the Prince de Benevento and the Duke d'Otranto. I want to see them immediately. Now come, Champagny," he said, when the court-marshal had withdrawn; "let us go to work. We have a great many things to attend to, and there is but little time left, for, as I told you before, I will set out this very night."

Fifteen minutes afterward Talleyrand and Fouché entered the cabinet agreeably to the emperor's orders. They found him amid his maps, on which he marched the various armies by means of the colored pins which Champagny handed to him.

"Gentlemen," exclaimed Napoleon, saluting the new-comers, "the Austrians have commenced war; come hither and see!"

In the mean time the empress, according to the wishes of her consort, had repaired with her ladies of honor to the dining-room, and waited for the arrival of Napoleon. The dishes had already been served up; for, owing to the hasty manner in which the emperor liked to dine, the various courses could not successively be brought from the kitchen, but had to be placed on the table before dinner commenced. A number of silver warming-vessels, filled with hot water, always stood on the imperial table. Only the roast chicken, which every day made the last course, and was one of the emperor's favorite dishes, had remained in the kitchen; it was still turning on the spit, and waiting for the moment when it was to be carried up. But this moment was delayed an unusually long time to-day. The first chicken had long ago been replaced by a second, a third, and a fourth, and this one had been roasting so much that it was tough and juiceless. It had not yet been called for. The waiters returned from time to time into the kitchen for boiling water, to fill anew the silver vessels on which the dishes were kept warm.

"If that goes on in the same manner we shall depopulate the whole poultry-yard," grumbled the chief cook, ordering a fresh half-dozen of young chickens to be brought in and prepared for roasting.

The emperor did not come. The clock struck seven, eight, nine, and ten, and Napoleon had not yet made his appearance in the dining-room. But this long delay did not cause the least impatience or anger to appear on the face of the empress; not for a single moment did she lose her temper. Graceful and gay, she conversed with her cavaliers and ladies of honor, and her eyes but occasionally glanced at the door by which Napoleon had to enter.

At last the emperor appeared. He walked toward the empress with a hasty nod, and offering her his hand to conduct her to the table, he said: "I believe it is a little late. I have kept you waiting, I suppose?"

Josephine laughed. "The question is rather *naïve*, my friend," she said; "I have been waiting ever since six o'clock, and it is now past eleven."

"Ah, that is late, indeed," said the emperor abstractedly. "I thought I had already dined; Champagny, however, reminded me that this was not the case. Well, Josephine, let us eat!" And he commenced eating the soup which the grand-marshal placed before him.

Thanks to the warming-vessels, the dishes had remained palatable; but the chief cook, when the gratifying announcement was made that the emperor had at length made his appearance, had just ordered the twenty-third chicken to be put on the spit for the purpose of having a juicy and freshly-roasted wing in readiness.

The emperor, who was very reticent and abstracted, took his dinner even more rapidly than usual, and no sooner had he finished than he rose impetuously from his chair and left the table. Without addressing a word to the empress, he walked across the room.

Josephine gazed after him with a long and mournful look, and her face was sad. "He is cruel," she muttered to herself. "After waiting so many hours, he has scarcely a word for me, and leaves me without salutation!"

But when Napoleon was near the door, he turned round and walked hastily toward the empress. "Good-night, my dear Josephine," he said, giving his hand to her. "It is already late—near midnight—retire. We shall not meet again to-day; farewell, and *au revoir!*"

He nodded to her, and then left the room for his cabinet. On arriving there, he bolted the small door leading into the corridor, and thence into the apartments of the empress, calling in a loud voice, "Constant!" The *valet de chambre* entered immediately. "Constant!" said the emperor, "come hither close to me, and listen. You will quickly set in order my travelling-coach, so that I shall be able to set out in an hour. Roustan and you will accompany me—no one else. But you must not say a word about my departure. I want it to be known at the Tuileries, as well as in Paris, to-morrow only, that I have left the capital, and it is of the highest importance that it should remain a secret until then. Do you understand me? And now make haste! In an hour every thing must be ready!"

Constant bowed in silence and withdrew. "Yes, yes," he murmured, while hastily passing on, "I understood the emperor very well. His departure is to remain a secret; that is to say, especially for the empress. Ah! the poor, good empress! How she will weep when she hears to-morrow that the emperor has again set out without her! Formerly he always took her with him; she had to share the triumphs and troubles of the journey; but now she must stay at home. Poor Josephine! she is so good, and loves him intensely! But I must obey the emperor's order. I cannot tell her any thing! I cannot, but it would be no fault of mine if some one else should! Ah! a good idea strikes me! The empress had the gold travelling-case of the emperor brought to her yesterday in order to have one like it made for the viceroy of Italy. I must go immediately and get it from her maid, and she is fortunately tenderly devoted to the empress!"

CHAPTER XLV.

JOSEPHINE'S FAREWELL.

The empress in the mean time had returned to her rooms, sad and absorbed in her reflections. She had dismissed her ladies of honor; only her mistress of ceremonies, Madame de Rémusat, was still with her, and her maids were in the adjoining room to await her orders until she retired.

No sooner had Josephine reached her room than she sat down slowly and abstractedly, and, throwing back her head, fixed her eyes on the ceiling. An expression of profound grief was visible in her features, and darkened the shade with which age was veiling her countenance. When smiling, Josephine was still a graceful and fascinating woman, but when melancholy it was but too plainly to be seen that her charms were fading, and neither the flattering rouge nor the skill of the artist could conceal this fact.

Josephine's brow was now often clouded, and her youthful beauty was fast losing its charms. Gloomy forebodings were constantly passing over her heart; she felt that she was standing as on the brink of a precipice, and that the days of her happiness were numbered. She awoke every morning in terror, for before the evening she might be cast into an abyss of sorrow—removed from the Tuilleries and the side of her husband—replaced by another, a younger woman, the daughter of an ancient sovereign house, who was to become the wife of Napoleon and the mother of his sons. Josephine knew that the brothers and sisters of the emperor were constantly importuning him to disown his childless wife, and to secure his throne and dynasty, as well as their own, by choosing another consort giving an heir to his crown. She knew that Talleyrand was representing this to him daily as a political necessity, without which his empire and his greatness would be endangered. She knew also that Napoleon no longer, as formerly, closed his ears against these insinuations, but, eagerly listening, held them in serious consideration.

Josephine was aware of all this, and sat in her room a prey to well-grounded suspicion and sorrowful presentiments.

Madame de Rémusat looked at her awhile, sighing and in silence; she now softly approached the empress, and, taking her hand, said in an affectionate voice, "Your majesty ought to retire! You need sleep; it is long past midnight, and your eyes are weary."

"Not from waking—from weeping, my dear Rémusat," said the empress, pressing the hand of her confidante. "But you are right, I will retire. In sleep we forget our grief. Rémusat, in my dreams I always see Napoleon as affectionate, as loving as he ever was—in my dreams he loves me still and looks at me, not with the stern eyes of the emperor, but of a tender husband. When I awake, Rémusat, his fine face still before my mind, and remember that his love is now gone and lost forever—oh, then a sword seems to pierce my heart, and I shed scalding tears in spite of myself!

And yet I will retire. He commanded me, and I will obey."

"How discouraged your majesty is again to-day!" said Madame de Rémusat, sighing. "Still it seems to me there is less cause than ever. The emperor was more cordial and affectionate than usual. He was evidently abstracted, and occupied with important plans, and yet he returned; his expression was unusually gentle, and his voice trembled when he bade farewell to your majesty."

"But why did he bid me farewell?" exclaimed the empress. "This is what fills me with anxiety. Heretofore he only said to me, 'Good-night!' and, 'we shall meet again to-morrow, Josephine!' But to-day he said, 'Farewell, and *au revoir!*' Rémusat, there was a hidden meaning in these words. Something unusual is to happen, for the emperor never took leave of me in this manner. '*Au revoir!*' You never say that to one whom you meet again in the morning. It means assuredly something! But you are right—I need repose, for my limbs are trembling, and my head is burning, as if I had fever! Call my maids!"

Josephine sighed deeply, and rose to be undressed. She was so absorbed in her reflections that she, who always addressed a pleasant word to her servants, did not apparently notice their presence. In silence she allowed her jewels to be removed, which Madame de Rémusat carefully put away into their caskets; in silence she suffered herself to be divested of her blue satin dress, embroidered with silver, and her white satin underskirt, without observing that her first maid was absent. When her wrapper was brought by the second maid, she noticed that the first was not present.

"Where is Dufour?" she asked, hesitatingly.

"Your majesty, she has just been called out to attend to something urgently required by his majesty the emperor," said the second maid, approaching the empress.

But Josephine pushed her back. "To attend to something urgently required by the emperor?" she asked, breathlessly. "What does that mean? Ah, there is Dufour! What could have detained her?" And she rushed toward her and grasped her hand.

"Dufour, where have you been? What is the matter?"

"Your majesty, Constant wished to see me. I beg pardon for coming so late, but it was something very urgent."

"Urgent! There is the same word again," exclaimed Josephine. "What was it that was 'urgent?'"

"Your majesty, M. Constant wanted the golden travelling-case of the emperor, which your majesty showed to the jeweller to-day. As it was in my keeping, he applied to me for it."

"Well, could he not wait until to-morrow?" asked the empress.

"No, your majesty, for the emperor needs the travelling-case, and at once."

Josephine uttered a cry. "He is about to depart! Oh, I feel he is going to leave me!" she exclaimed, almost beside herself. And without reflecting and hesitating, regardless of the fact that she was undressed, her shoulders bare, and her feet incased in small slippers of crimson velvet—forgetful of every thing but the distracting thought that the emperor was leaving her, without even a farewell, she ran across the room toward the door.

Vainly did Madame de Rémusat try to detain her. Josephine pushed her aside, opened the door, and ran out. Breathless, bathed in tears, her dishevelled locks streaming in the air, she hastened through the rooms and magnificent halls in which she was accustomed to appear in a gorgeous toilet, and receive the homage of princes. On crossing the threshold of the first reception-room she lost one of her slippers; but this modern Atalanta did not know it as she rushed along the corridor and down the stairs. Having reached the palace-yard, she found that she was not mistaken—there stood the emperor's travelling-carriage. Roustan and Constant were waiting in front of it, but she passed them before they knew what had happened. Trembling and weeping, she sat down in the carriage.

The emperor at that moment entered the palace-yard, while the two servants were still standing near, speechless, and as if paralyzed with terror. He took no notice of them, and ascending the steps of the carriage beheld the strange white figure within.

"What is that?" exclaimed the emperor, standing still. "Who is there?"

"It is I," exclaimed the empress, in a suppliant voice. "I, Josephine! You wished to depart again without me, Bonaparte; but I will not suffer you; I will cling to you! I cannot leave you!"

She threw her arms around his neck, but Napoleon pushed her back. "You are a fool, Josephine!" he said, angrily. "This is childish; you ridiculously retard my departure. I do not wish to hear any more! Be kind enough to leave the carriage! It is necessary that I set out immediately."

"But, Bonaparte, you cannot be in earnest," cried Josephine, sobbing aloud. "Have mercy on me! Do not drive me from you! I tell you,

you must use violence to remove me! Oh, have pity on me—on my poor, painful heart, and let me go along with you! Remember that you promised me the other day that I should accompany you on your next journey. Oh, Bonaparte, keep your word! Keep your word only this time! Have pity on me, and let me accompany you!" She covered his lips and cheeks with her kisses and tears. Napoleon's heart seemed to be softened, for he involuntarily raised his arms and wound them around Josephine's neck. "How cold you are!" he exclaimed. "And your shoulders are bare! What does this mean?"

"It means," said the empress, half laughing, half weeping, "that I was just about retiring when—when I heard the carriage drive up to the door. My heart told me that you intended to leave me, and that I would not have time to dress if I wished to see you, and therefore I came at once."

"And indeed you were right; if you had come a minute later, I would certainly have been gone."

The emperor entered the carriage, closed the door, and shouted in a powerful voice out of the window: "Have every thing the empress needs for her toilet sent to the first station, that she may find it on her arrival. Order the mistress of ceremonies to set out immediately with her majesty's ladies of honor. They must be at Strasburg on the 18th. Forward!"

Josephine uttered a joyous cry, and sat down on the emperor's knees, pressing his head with her arms against her bosom. He laughed, and did not resist her. Roustan and Constant ascended, and the carriage started.

"Bonaparte, thanks! a thousand thanks!" whispered the empress. "Never shall I forget this hour, for it proves to me that you still love your poor Josephine, or that at least you pity her!"

"Oh, you know full well, traitress, that I cannot withstand your tears," said Napoleon, half angrily, half smilingly. "But you are almost naked!"

"Yes, I am naked, as it behooves a beggar-woman who begs for love at the palace-gate," said the empress, smiling. "I hope, my emperor and lord will give me something to cover my nakedness."

"Here is what you want, you impulsive beggar!" exclaimed Napoleon, throwing the sable robe, which the Emperor Alexander had presented to him, over her shoulders, and wrapping it carefully around her.

"Accept my thanks!" exclaimed Josephine, laughing; "I will wear it as a token of your kindness."

"You will not," quickly replied Napoleon. "I merely lend it to you until our arrival at the next station, where, I hope, we shall meet a courier with your wardrobe."

"But he will not be able to overtake us there, Bonaparte, and you will have to leave me the robe for some time yet."

"No; he will travel faster on horseback than we in our carriage. I would have no objection to the robe myself, for the night is cold!"

"It is cold; come, I will let you have part of it," wrapping it around the emperor, and clinging closely to him. Napoleon laughed, and winding his arms around the slender waist of Josephine, pressed her to his breast. She laid her wearied head silently on his shoulder. The carriage continued the journey without interruption, and, exhausted by her previous excitement, she closed her eyes and slept.

Suddenly the voice of the emperor aroused her. They had reached the first station; it was already daylight. The municipal officers of the small town were standing in front of the post-office to present their respects. A man, mounted on a horse covered with foam, was near them. It was the courier who had brought the wardrobe of the empress.

"There is your luggage," said the emperor, pointing smilingly at a small leather trunk which had been placed on the back seat. "The empress has set out as a travelling adventurer!"

"Yes, you are right," exclaimed Josephine. "It is just like a fairy-story. Some poor, disowned princess is met on her journey by a handsome son of a king, who takes her in his arms, gives her magnificent dresses, and marries her. I thank you, my friend, and now I will attend to my toilet."

"I hope not here in the carriage?" asked Napoleon, in surprise. "We shall have the trunk carried into the house; I believe the postmaster has a room where you can dress, and a servant-girl who can assist you."

"But, Bonaparte," exclaimed Josephine, "do you not see that that is impossible? It is daylight; is, then, the carriage to open and the empress to alight with one slipper on her feet, to be triumphantly conducted into the house? Ah, my friend, all Europe would smile at the idyllic empress who accompanied her husband on his journey in such a dishabille."

"It is true," said Napoleon, moodily, "it would be a fine anecdote for the so-called legitimate princes, and they would proudly laugh at the vio-

lation of the *dehors* committed by imperial upstarts. As though it were so difficult to learn the ridiculous rules of their etiquette, if one should deem it worth while!"

Josephine gently patted the emperor's forehead with her white hand. "No clouds must darken my morning sun," she said, "for they would foretell a gloomy day. I wish you could transform yourself into my maid!"

"What!" exclaimed the emperor, laughing. "Transform myself into your maid?"

"And why not, Bonaparte?" asked Josephine. "Did not your brother, the great Jove, transform himself into an ox for the sake of Europa? The carriage is moving again! Draw the curtains, and then, my dear maid, we shall commence dressing." She hastily opened the small travelling-trunk, which had carefully been filled with every thing required for her toilet—small velvet gaiters, a comfortable velvet cloak, one of her large cashmere shawls, and a beautiful red satin dress with lace trimmings.

"You will have but little trouble with me," said the empress, busily examining the contents of the trunk. "Dear Madame Rémusat has arranged every thing as judiciously as possible, and forgotten nothing. There are warm gloves, embroidered handkerchiefs—in short, all I need. Ah! there is but one thing she has forgotten."

"Well, and what is that?"

"It is a mirror. Bonaparte, you must be my mirror to-day. But come now, my dear maid! enter upon your duties. In the first place, assist me in putting on my gaiters."

"What admirable ones they are!" said the emperor. "Are these tiny things really large enough for your feet?"

"Yes. Did you forget that your Josephine has the smallest and prettiest foot in all France? Formerly, when you were not the all-powerful Napoleon, but the brave and illustrious General Bonaparte, you knew it. Ah, I wish you were still General Bonaparte, and we lived at our small house in the Rue Chantereine!"

"Indeed, I am glad that I am no longer there," said Napoleon. "It seems to me General Bonaparte did not forfeit his glory; he only changed his title and position. That of an emperor is not so bad, and the Tuileries a very pleasant residence. But, Josephine, let me see whether this fairy-shoe is really large enough for human foot!"

"Bonaparte, envy and jealousy prompt you to say so," said Josephine, laughing. "You cannot comprehend how any foot could be even smaller than yours. But just take into consideration that you are the great Bonaparte, and that I am but poor little Josephine—the insignificant creature that derives only from you light and life. Bonaparte, you have the largest foot that man ever had."

"What! I have the largest foot?" exclaimed Napoleon, in surprise. "Why, I have always been told that my foot was very small."

"Oh, that was a mistake," said Josephine, gravely, "for how would it otherwise be possible for you to trample down the whole of Europe as you are doing?"

Napoleon laughed. "Very good," he said, "you are right; I have put my foot on the neck of Europe, and shall crush all who resist me!"

"Bonaparte," exclaimed Josephine, menacingly, "no politics now, no threatening imperial face! Remember that, at the present moment, you are nothing but my maid. There is my foot! Put on my gaiter, and see whether it is large enough!"

Napoleon at once obeyed, his wife's toilet commenced, and the first day of their journey passed in laughter and affectionate chatting. The empress had not enjoyed so happy a day for years. All cares and apprehensions were forgotten. What did light-hearted Josephine care for the future?

But, alas! the second day was different. The smiles of the unfortunate woman met with no reply. The emperor was taciturn and gloomy. Wrapped in his sable robe, he was leaning in a corner of the carriage, and made only stern and brief answers to Josephine's questions. The heart and countenance of the empress grew heavy and anxious.

When they arrived at Strasburg on the evening of the fourth day, each of them sat silent—the empress with tearful eye; the emperor frowning and stern. Napoleon offered his arm to his consort, and conducted her into the palace. "Good-night, Josephine," he said, standing still at the entrance of the rooms destined for her, "good-night!"

"You will not take supper with me?" asked the empress, in a low, imploring voice.

"No, I have business to attend to. Good-night!" And he walked away without saluting or even looking at her. Josephine went into her rooms. She refused to partake of refreshment, and avoided the necessity of admitting the officials, who wished to pay their respects to her, by sending them word that she was too fatigued to receive any one. Alone she could weep without being disturbed.

At an unusually early hour on the following morning Napoleon entered her room. Josephine was just about to dress, assisted by her Parisian maids. He motioned them to withdraw, and then

commenced pacing the room in his usual manner, when excited.

"Napoleon," said Josephine, in a tremulous voice, "you have come with bad news. My heart tells me so, and I read it on your gloomy brow. Speak, and tell me every thing at once. I am prepared for it."

"Well, then, I must say," replied Napoleon, vehemently,—"you cannot, Josephine, accompany me farther. We must part this hour. I yielded to your wishes in spite of myself, but only thus far! A new campaign is about to begin; days of battles, troubles, and fatigues, are awaiting me. You must not and cannot share them. You must remain here."

Josephine cast a melancholy look on him. "But when you have conquered, when you have made again your triumphant entry into Vienna, will you then call me, Napoleon? Shall I then share your triumphs as I used to do? Bonaparte, do not now make an evasive reply! Tell me the truth, for I can bear it. Tell me, when the fortune of war has favored you—when you have vanquished Austria, as you have hitherto every other enemy—will you then call me to you? The truth, my friend, the truth!"

"Very well, I will tell you the truth," exclaimed Napoleon, after a brief hesitation. "No, Josephine—I will not. You can share my triumphs no more!"

Josephine uttered a cry, and her eyes filled with tears. "I am doomed, then," she said, "and what Fouché told me was true!"

"What did he tell you?" asked the emperor, hastily.

"He told me to prepare for a heavy blow—that you, Napoleon, had secretly applied to the Emperor Alexander for the hand of his sister, and that only the resistance of the dowager prevented you from accomplishing your purpose."

"Yes," exclaimed Napoleon, moodily, and, as if absent-minded, "yes, the proud empress-dowager hates me, and hastened to marry her daughter to a petty German prince rather than let her become the consort of the Emperor of the French.* Well, no matter! other princes have daughters, too, and one of them will assuredly be only too happy to become my wife!"

"Napoleon, and you dare tell me so?" exclaimed Josephine, reproachfully. "You admit, then, that you are about to disown me?"

The emperor started. "Pardon me, Josephine," he said, in confusion, "I was absent-minded, I—"

"Yes, you were," interrupted the empress, "and while so, you betrayed your thoughts. It is true, then! Cruel man! You have forgotten every thing, and the whole past has been blotted out. You can seriously think of parting with me, your best friend?"

"No, not now, Josephine," exclaimed Napoleon. "You have nothing to fear. I shall not enter Germany as a wooer, but as a soldier, and I do not desire to seek myrtle-crowns, but laurels!"

"But, my husband, when you have gained fresh laurels and new territories with the blood of your soldiers, then, I suppose, Josephine is to be sacrificed?"

Napoleon did not reply. He paced the room slowly and with a bowed head. Standing still, he looked with sad eyes in his consort's tearful face.

"Josephine," he said, in a grave voice, "you have a noble heart, and it will bear the truth. Yes, there may be a day when we shall have to part, although I love you, and I know well that you are the only faithful friend on whom I can rely! Judge, therefore, what pangs it will cost me when obliged to come to the terrible resolution to separate from you, my guardian angel! But I belong to my people—I belong to my glory! My power has assumed such gigantic proportions that I must support it with foundations that cannot be overthrown. The Emperor Napoleon must have a successor; if you had given birth to one, I should never have parted from you. Now all hope is gone, and I shall, perhaps, be compelled one day to look for a consort among the daughters of kings. I really do not wish to do so, but my duty to my people makes it imperative."

"No, not your duty, but your ambition!" cried Josephine, with streaming eyes. "You have sacrificed every thing for that—your tranquillity, your conscience, the blood of your soldiers, and now your wife!"

"Yes, it is as you say, Josephine," exclaimed Napoleon; "it is my ambition that separates me from you, and compels me to part with her who has been my glory and my life for sixteen years! It is ambition that points its iron arm at my imperial crown, and commands me to look for another empress, that I and my son may enter the ranks of legitimate princes. I have formed vast

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* Napoleon ordered Talleyrand at Erfurt to inquire of the Emperor Alexander whether he would permit him to marry his sister. Alexander replied that nothing could afford him greater pleasure than that Napoleon should become his brother-in-law, but the matter did not depend on his decision alone. The empress-dowager must also be consulted. No sooner had she heard of Napoleon's wishes than she induced her daughter to marry the Duke of Oldenburg. The notification of the marriage of the grand-duchess to this German prince was the only reply that was ever made to Napoleon's inquiring wish.

plans; I shall soon effect new convulsions: I shall vanquish all my enemies, and Europe will have to recognize me as her master. But when nothing remains to wish for—when I have so ascended as to leave no heights above me, then I shall think of securing the happiness and peace of my people and of my empire. To do so, I am in need of a direct heir. For myself, I ask and wish for nothing; but my glory belongs to France. After my death my contemporaries will say of me, 'He was the only one who could strive for universal good, while his individual wishes had been gratified; others thought only of themselves—Bonaparte's wishes and deeds were for his country. There was one thing that was dear to him personally, and that was his wife! But the welfare of his people requiring it, he sacrificed this beloved wife to their interests.'"

"Words!" exclaimed Josephine. "You are vainly trying to conceal your innermost thoughts from me. I know you, Bonaparte, and can read your soul! You wish to connect yourself with the foremost sovereign houses of Europe, because such a union will flatter your pride and your insatiable ambition. When you are the son-in-law of an emperor or a king, you will believe that you are at liberty to do every thing with impunity. You will deem yourself a demigod, and, accompanied by your victorious legions, you will march to the conquest of the whole world. But that will not be your destiny. You believe you can enslave the nations. Beware lest they one day awake, break their chains, and take a terrible revenge on the tyrant whom they allowed so long to oppress them! Seduced by your illusive ambition, you will disown Josephine? Infatuated man! you will perceive too late that you walk near a volcano. Oh, Bonaparte, I tremble and weep for you! Remember that you have often called me your guardian angel. Believe me, when you disown me, you disown your good fortune. It will forsake the faithless man, and your star will sink in an eternal night! That is what wounds my heart, and drives me to despair. You will be alone in the midst of traitors and false friends. When Josephine is with you no more, no one will have good intentions toward you. No one will dare tell you the truth, when you lose your best friend. Falsehood will flatter you, but only to lead you to the verge of the precipice!" The empress, with quivering limbs and pale features, sank on a chair, and covered her face.

A long pause ensued. Napoleon gloomily continued walking the room. At last he approached Josephine, and gently laid his hand on her shoulder. "Do not weep," he said, imploringly. "We have once more allowed phantoms to frighten us, and quarrelled about things that belong to the future. You are still my wife, and who knows whether you will not always remain mine? Who knows whether you will not soon be my widow? I am about to enter into another war, and it will be a desperate, obstinate struggle, in which old Austria will try to wrest the palm of victory from young France. Victory will perch on my banners. I have no doubt of that, but who knows whether I shall not have to pay for it with my blood! for I must not spare myself—I shall always be at the head of my troops, and, like my private soldiers, with them bare my own breast to the hail of bullets. In so decisive a struggle as will take place now, the emperor will be nothing but a soldier, and do his duty."

"Oh, Bonaparte!" cried Josephine, rising in dismay and clinging to him, "oh, have mercy on my heart! Do not rashly expose yourself to the accidents of battle! Remember that the fate of millions depends on your life! Remember that I should die if an accident befall you! Oh, my dearest husband, be kind and generous—spare yourself, and spare my love!"

"Then you love me in spite of your gloomy forebodings?" asked Napoleon, with a gentle smile. "Oh, I know my Josephine is my most faithful and best friend, and whatever may happen, her heart will always be mine. Let this be our farewell, Josephine! I must go; I must depart this very hour. To-morrow I join my army, and my cannon will soon announce to Germany that the victor of Austerlitz and Jena is demonstrating his right to rule, and at his own pleasure to destroy or create kingdoms."

CHAPTER XLVI.

FERDINAND VON SCHILL.

A TRAVELLING carriage stopped in front of the house on Frederick Street in which Major von Schill had established his headquarters since his regiment had been sent to Berlin. The horses were wet with perspiration, and the carriage was covered with mud. Every thing indicated that the young man seated in it had made a long and hurried journey, and his exhausted and anxious face induced the belief that the object could not but be highly important. He alighted hastily, and approached the house, in front of which a crowd of idlers were staring at the windows. Address-

ing one of them, he asked, "Can you tell me whether Major von Schill lives in this house?"

"Yes," said the man, proudly; "every good citizen of Berlin can tell you that Major Ferdinand von Schill, the favorite of our people and of all patriotic Germans, lives here."

The young man smiled. "And can you tell me whether Major von Schill is at home?"

"Well, what should we stand here for, if Schill were not at home? We are only here to see and salute him when he appears at the window, and to escort him when he leaves the house. He is always surrounded by a guard of honor, composed of citizens of Berlin, and the cheers never cease wherever he may be. I myself have not yet seen him, for I was ill. But yesterday was my birthday, and my wife presented me with a pipe-bowl with Schill's portrait; my daughter says he is the best-looking man in the world, and she has bought a locket with his portrait, which she is wearing on her neck. I have come to see whether the portraits so much in vogue are like him, and whether he is not only the bravest soldier, but, as the girls pretend, the finest-looking man. I will cheer so vigorously as to shake the statues on the arsenal. I suppose you have also come to see him?"

"That is all I have come for," said the young man, and, turning to the postilion, who had just unhitched his horses, he shouted:

"Postilion, when you arrive at the post-office, order immediately some fresh horses for me and send them hither. I shall set out for home in half an hour!"

He then walked toward the house, elbowing himself through the constantly increasing crowd, and reached the door. After rapidly crossing the hall, he went up-stairs. A footman, dressed in a rich livery, who was pacing the corridor on the upper floor, looked inquiringly at the young stranger.

"Does Major von Schill live here?"

"Yes, sir."

"And is he at home?"

"I am not quite sure—I rather believe he has gone out. He is subjected to visits and invitations to such an extent, that I really do not know whether there are persons with him at present, or whether some of his admirers have taken him to another banquet to be given in his honor. The people of Berlin are perfectly infatuated with my master, and if an angel should appear upon earth, they could not pay more deference to him. The fuss they are making about him has positively made him ill. Day and night he must attend parties, listen, and reply to a thousand speeches, and take wine with everybody; and then, again, the ladies are not the least active in demonstrating his popularity. Oh, the people of this city will certainly kill my dear, good master in this way, and I must see to it that he gets occasionally a little rest, and is able to take a peaceful nap on his sofa. I think I must tell you now, sir, that Major von Schill is not at home. He returned only at daybreak from a ball which the city of Berlin gave in his honor; at noon he will have to attend a banquet to which the governor of Berlin, General von Lestocq, has invited him, and which is in fact another testimonial of the public respect for him. Major von Schill must have some repose, or his popularity will be the death of him. Please return some other time. You cannot see him to-day."

"But, my friend, I cannot return," said the stranger. "I am not one of the citizens of Berlin, but I am an enthusiastic admirer of Schill, and have travelled three days and nights without interruption, in order to bring important news to him."

"Ah, that alters the case;" said the footman. "If you bring important news for my master, I will go and see whether he is at home."

"Do so, my friend, and tell the major that Referendary von Bothmar has come from Cassel expressly to see him."

The footman nodded, and hastened into the room, the door of which he had hitherto guarded with the affection of a friend and the obstinacy of a faithful sentinel. He returned in a few minutes, opened the door, and exclaimed: "The major requests you to come in!"

M. von Bothmar entered. In obedience to the sign the footman made to him, he crossed the anteroom and opened the door of the one adjoining. A fine-looking man in the uniform of a major, with a fresh, florid countenance, and high forehead adorned with a broad scar, came to meet him. It was Ferdinand von Schill, the lieutenant of the queen's dragoons, who, ever since the disastrous battle of Jena, had given such brilliant proofs of his courage and patriotism at Kolberg (and during the guerilla warfare he had afterward entered into on his own responsibility), that the people hoped he would become the savior of the country. The King of Prussia had promoted him to a majority, and conferred on his regiment the honorary distinction that it should be the first Prussian regiment that was to make its entry into Berlin after the French had evacuated the capital.

"Let me welcome you, my dear sir," said Schill, kindly offering his hand to the young man. "You

told my footman you had come from Cassel to bring important news to me. You are, therefore, a good German patriot, and I may greet M. von Bothmar as a friend and brother. But let me hear what you bring—glad tidings, I suppose?"

"No, major, but important," said M. von Bothmar.

Schill became uneasy, and a deep blush crimsoned his cheeks for a moment. "You know Dörnberg?" he inquired.

"I know him, and I was also aware of his plan, and of the day and hour when his blow was to be struck."

"Then he has commenced already?" asked Schill.

"Yes, commenced and ended," said Bothmar, mournfully. "Our noble Dörnberg expected too much of the patriotism of the Hessians. He arrived with the legion of his peasants as far as Cassel, and called upon the soldiers to join him in order to expel King Jerome and his French minions. But the soldiers did not listen to him; they obeyed the orders of their officers, and turned their arms against their German brethren, who were soon routed and dispersed."

"This is really dreadful!" ejaculated Schill. "And Dörnberg?"

"Dörnberg succeeded in making his escape he will probably go to Prague, where the Elector of Hesse is at present residing."

"Well, I am glad that he is at least safe," exclaimed Schill, breathing more freely. "The defeat is a disastrous blow, to be sure, but the good news that we have just received will afford us consolation for it. The Archduke Charles has gained a glorious victory over the French at Hof."

"Can that be positively true?" exclaimed Bothmar. "During my whole journey I did not hear a word about it. On the contrary, I learned everywhere only the mournful intelligence that Napoleon had put himself at the head of his army, and was advancing victoriously in the direction of Vienna."

"And yet my statement is perfectly true. General Lestocq, governor of Berlin, in joyful commemoration of this victory, issued to-day the countersign of 'Charles and Hof!'"

"Heaven grant that you are correctly informed, and that the general is not mistaken!" said M. von Bothmar, sighing. "Pardon me for not sharing your confidence. The deplorable turn our affairs have taken in Hesse has discouraged me, and then—but I am not through yet with the news which brought me to you."

"Speak, sir,—what else has happened?" exclaimed Schill.

"Excuse me," said M. von Bothmar, "should I assume the semblance of one of your most trusted confidants, and take the liberty of speaking to you about your most secret plans. You intrusted to your faithful friend and follower, Romberg, letters and proclamations to be circulated in Westphalia. Am I right?"

"You are."

"You gave to him private letters for Counsellor von Ledebour, at Bielefeld, and for Colonel von Sobbe, who were to head the insurrection in that part of the country?"

"I did, sir; you are right."

"Well, then, major, Romberg was arrested at Magdeburg; all his papers, letters, and proclamations, were seized, and General Michaud sent him under guard to Cassel."

"Romberg imprisoned! My dear, faithful Romberg in danger!" exclaimed Schill, mournfully.

"No," said M. von Bothmar, solemnly, "Romberg is no longer imprisoned; he is not now in danger."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean that Romberg, immediately after his arrival at Cassel, was tried by a court-martial, and that sentence of death was at once passed upon him."

"He has been shot?"

"Yes, Schill, Romberg has been shot."

Schill uttered a cry, and covered his face with his hands. "Oh!" he murmured, "I have lost my most faithful friend, and Germany one of her noblest sons. He was an humble peasant, but the heart of a great patriot was throbbing under his blouse. He was the Andrew Hofer of the North, and his death is a terrible disaster! But I will not complain," added Schill—"no, I will not complain. Blessed are the dead, and who knows how soon we ourselves shall have to bid farewell to life? The storm is threatening us on all sides."

"And it is threatening our noble Schill, the hope of Germany," exclaimed M. von Bothmar. "I have told you that all Romberg's papers were seized, and among them the letters which you wrote to your friends Ledebour and Sobbe. Your proclamations were read by the French authorities, and as they thereby became aware of your plans, they will at once take steps to put a stop to your agitation, and, if possible, put you to death. Would Prussia be powerful and courageous enough to protect you, if the King of Westphalia should charge you with being a traitor and demagogue, and if Napoleon should insist on your punishment?"

"It is true," said Schill, "you point out to me

an imminent danger, from which I can only escape by striking immediately. If we give our enemies time to mature their plans, all will be lost. We must, therefore, act at once. We must hesitate no longer, but begin even before my comrades here have learned that Romberg did not succeed in his enterprise. We may be more successful, for God will perhaps be merciful to me; He has decreed, perhaps, that Schill shall first of all break the chains imposed on us by the foreign despot."

"Germany hopes in Schill," exclaimed Bothmar, enthusiastically, "and hence I was bold enough to violate the oath of allegiance which I had taken to King Jerome, and disclose to the German hero the danger menacing him. I am a referendary at the department of state in Cassel, and accordingly I soon heard of the danger to which you are exposed. Under the pretext that I intended to enforce tranquillity and obedience among the peasants on my estate, situated a few miles from Cassel, I obtained leave of absence for six days, and hastened hither. I set out from there three days ago, and, thank God! I have found you in time to give you warning."

"Thanks to you," exclaimed Schill, affectionately embracing M. von Bothmar; "you have saved my life, perhaps; at all events, you have rendered an important service to the sacred cause of the fatherland."

"Every one must serve the fatherland in his own way, and according to his ability," said Bothmar, gently; "you are serving it by your heroic arm and soul-stirring example; I am doing so by trying at least to prevent mischief, and to assist my brethren as much as I can. My task now is accomplished! Farewell! and may Heaven grant victory to your patriotic zeal!"

"Where are you going?" said Schill, grasping Bothmar's arm and detaining him. "You must not leave me yet; you must remain here at least to-day, that—but what is the meaning of this bugle-call?"

"It means that the postilion has arrived with his horses, and calls me," said M. von Bothmar, smiling.

"What! You have travelled three days and three nights, and are departing so soon?"

"Have I not told you that I obtained leave of absence only for six days? Well, then, three days hence I shall be in Cassel again, and, I believe, I have improved my six days in a highly commendable manner."

"Farewell, noble young man! when we meet again, Germany, if it please God, will be free and happy!"

"Oh, may it be so!" said M. von Bothmar, sighing. "Be prudent, sir, do not endanger your life; remember that it does not belong to you, but to the fatherland, and now farewell! The impatient postilion is sounding his bugle again. Farewell!"

He quickly left the room, but Schill accompanied to the staircase the friend he had gained so suddenly. He returned to his room and hastened to the window, to wave his hand once more to M. von Bothmar. Loud cheers greeted him as soon as his countenance was recognized behind the window-panes; the crowd in front of the house constantly increased, and when he appeared to the longing eyes of the citizens, they could not suppress their loud huzzas.

"They do me too much honor," said Schill to himself, smiling, and stepping back from the window. "But their love and its boisterous demonstrations are not exactly intended for myself individually. These kind people greet in me the first hope dawning to them after a long period of darkness; and, therefore, I will joyfully indulge them, and I will thank them by brave deeds. Yes, by deeds! The time of procrastination is over. I must hesitate no longer: I must act!"

His servant entered and handed him some letters just brought for him. He opened and read them rapidly. The perfume of the first, written on rose-colored note-paper, made him smile. "It is the sixth declaration of love that I have received to-day," he said, in a low voice, "and the sixth request for a rendezvous to-night. Oh, women! how innocent in your enthusiasm for poor Schill! You imagine you love me, and do not know that it is the fatherland that you love in me! I will reconquer your country, and bring back that sweet liberty which the tyrant has taken from us. Until then, no Cupid's love! My heart must belong wholly to Germany!"

He read the second letter. "Another painter asks me to sit to him! Why, have not the people already portraits enough of poor Schill? Has not every old citizen my head on his pipe or his snuff-box? Does not every pretty girl wear my scarred face in her locket? I have no time to spare for painters; I must take the field!"

He opened the third; but while he read it, his eyes were sad. "Again the same admonition which I have so often received. Do they doubt my patriotism? Do they believe that I am a traitor, and will suffer the opportunity to pass by without improving it?"

He looked at the letter again, which contained

only the following words: "Brutus, thou sleepest, awake!" *

"No," he exclaimed, in a powerful voice, "I do not sleep. I am awake, and behold the golden dawn of freedom! O Germany, my arm and my honor belong to thee! To thee—and to her!" he whispered, almost inaudibly. "Yes, to her—the genius of Prussia! For her I will sacrifice my life!"

The door opened again, and the footman entered. "Major, there is another gentleman who desires to see you on pressing business. I wanted to turn him off, but he said it was indispensable for him to see you. He told me he wished to deliver to the major something that would gladden his heart. His name is High-Chamberlain von Schladen, and he said he had just arrived from Königsberg."

"Show him in at once," exclaimed Schill, but, in his impetuosity, he himself led the way and opened the door.

"Come in, Mr. High-Chamberlain, and forgive me for making you wait even a moment," he said, offering his hand to M. von Schladen, and conducting him into his sitting-room. "You come from Königsberg?"

"Yes, major, and I bring you greetings from your friends, from the brethren of the great league, and also from the king and the queen."

"She really told you to greet me in her name?" asked Schill. "Oh, do not deceive me; tell me the truth! Did the queen really tell you that?"

"She did more than that, major," said M. von Schladen, smiling; "she intrusted to me a present for you, which I am to deliver to yourself, and which she made for you with her own hands."

At this moment Schill was a truly handsome man. If the ladies and the painters of Berlin had seen him just then, they would have been transported at his noble countenance, as his black eyes sparkled with joy. "The queen sends me a present!" he exclaimed—"a present which she herself has made!"

"Yes, and on which she inscribed your name with her own hand, that it might be to you a plain and undeniable proof of her favor."

"Oh, give it to me, sir!" exclaimed Schill, stretching out his hands.

M. von Schladen drew a small package, wrapped in paper, from his bosom, and handed it to Schill.

"On my knees will I receive this present from my queen!" exclaimed Schill. "Oh, it seems to me as though she were standing before me, looking at me with that sad smile which brings tears into the eyes of all who behold her! When I was at Königsberg the other day, it was permitted me to speak to her, and press my lips on her hand. With that kiss I devoted myself to her for my whole life, and she is ever before my eyes, clothed in a sort of divine beauty—as a Madonna holding the Messiah of Freedom in her arms! And the noble queen, to whom I pray every night as to a saint, sends me a present which she has made for me with her own hands? Oh, am I worthy of such kindness; have I done any thing entitling me to such a proof of condescension on her part, and am I thus honored by her who is the guardian angel of Prussia!—whom Napoleon hates, because he fears her zeal and fidelity. As a vestal, she has kept alive the fire of patriotism on the altar of her country. When all despair, she still hopes for the redemption of her people from a victorious but merciless enemy. I will consecrate my life anew to her, though unworthy of the distinguished regard she bestows on me by this present, the work of her own royal hands."

"Yes, but you are worthy of the favor of our noble queen," said M. von Schladen, solemnly, "for you are the representative hero of Germany, and Heaven has decreed, perhaps, that you should break the first link of the chain with which the usurper has fettered our country. As soon as that link is broken, it will be easy to break the rest. You, Major von Schill, are the hope of Germany—the hope of Queen Louisa. Take, then, the present which she sends you, worthy champion of the cause of her country!"

He handed the package to the major. Schill, kneeling, took it and unfolded the wrapper. It contained a magnificent memorandum-book, embroidered in gold, and closed with a gold pencil. Schill admired the rich art displayed in the book, and, opening it, looked for the autograph of the queen. He uttered a joyful cry. The queen had written these words, in small, neat characters: "For brave Major von Schill. Louisa."

Schill pressed his lips on the words, and then, closing the book, put it into his bosom, and rose from his knees. "It will rest on my heart as long as I live," he said; "its every pulsation belongs to her! And now, M. von Schladen, what is the state of affairs at Königsberg? What hopes are entertained there?"

* Schill received almost daily, from various parts of Germany, letters containing nothing but those words. A secret society, extending throughout Germany, seemed to have made it a special duty to instigate Schill to strike the blow, lest the homage he received in Berlin should render him forgetful of his mission.

"Hopes!" exclaimed M. von Schladen, with a mournful smile; "none—only apprehensions."

"And they do not yet think of bidding defiance to the tyrant, and of recalling noble Baron von Stein?"

"No, they dare not do so. Stein, proscribed by Napoleon, forsaken by his king, who sacrificed him at the emperor's behest, is living in exile, deprived of his whole property, which Napoleon confiscated; he is without employment, without influence, far from his country, far from his friends. The Emperor of Austria did what the King of Prussia dare not do: he gave an asylum to the proscribed patriot; Baron von Stein is now with his family at Brünn."

"And the king?" asked Schill. "Does he not feel it as a wound to bow to the tyrant's behest, and dismiss his noblest and ablest servant?"

"He does, perhaps," replied M. von Schladen, hesitatingly; "but he does not say so. The afflictions of the past years have broken his courage, and rendered him irresolute and timid. As soon as he received Napoleon's orders, he dismissed Baron von Stein, without bestowing any token of kindness or gratitude. Every true Prussian deeply felt this treatment; one of the most faithful and upright servants of the king, District-Councillor Scheffner, who has every day interviews with the queen, dared even to write a letter to the king, informing him of the indignation prevailing everywhere. He asked the king to gladden the hearts of all good Prussians, and to give a courageous proof of his royal gratitude toward the eminent minister, by conferring the order of the Black Eagle upon Baron von Stein."

"And what did the king say to him?"

"He replied that he was very sorry that he was unable to comply with this request. Although he entertained the highest respect for Baron von Stein, and would be glad to confer this exalted distinction on him, it would be highly improper at the present time to make so dangerous a demonstration."

"Such is the gratitude of kings toward their faithful servants!" exclaimed Schill, in a tone of bitter reproach; "such is the manner in which they reward those who have sacrificed for them their property and life! But we do not struggle for kings and princes; we are serving the adored fatherland; we are fighting for liberty, and the death which we find on the field of honor is an order of the Black Eagle which the great fatherland confers on us! O Germany, one day I shall also receive this honor at thy hands; free Germany will adorn my corpse with it!"

"Oh, what desponding words you are now uttering!" said M. von Schladen, anxiously. "Who can be courageous and hopeful when Schill talks of death?"

"I am not desponding," exclaimed Schill, smiling, "but I have a foreboding that I am to seal my love for Germany with my heart's blood. I am almost glad of it, for friendships so sealed are said to be eternal, and Germany will, perhaps, revere my memory when I die for her.—And Louisa! What says the queen? How does she bear these days of humiliation?"

"Like a heroine! Like a queen whose kingdom is not of this world. Her cheeks are pale, but a spirit of resignation pervades her countenance, and when she turns her blue eyes upward, there is an expression in them that plainly reveals her yearning for a home in heaven!"

"But her health is good?" inquired Schill, anxiously. "She is not ill?"

"That is to say, she is not positively ill, but her whole life is that of a martyr. Her heart is broken; she suffers mentally, while she is not altogether free from physical pain. But she never complains, and, alas! the physicians know of no remedy. There is but one for our smiling, suffering queen, and that is the deliverance of her country!"

"Germany must and shall be delivered," exclaimed Schill, enthusiastically. "Something must be done! We must arouse the sleepers; we must compel them to act!"

"You are right! The nation must wake and rise. That is the opinion of all patriots, as well as of the queen. And we are looking with trusting hearts toward you; we hope that you will give this impetus to our countrymen. It is out of the question to hesitate longer; we must act. Austria is in the field; her people are exultingly marching to vanquish the tyrant, who, with his proud armies, has again penetrated into Germany. The report that the Archduke Charles has gained a victory is as though it were the first herald announcing to us safety and restoration. Hope fills every heart. As soon as Schill unfurls his banner and calls upon his brethren to commence the holy struggle for the liberation of the fatherland, patriotic men from all the states of Prussia and North Germany will rally around him; the enthusiasm of the people will rush like a torrent carrying away the king and his ministers in spite of themselves; their hesitations, fears, and cowardice, will be overwhelmed by the public determination. The hope of the queen is in Schill's heroic example; it is the hope of Gneisenau, Blücher, and Scharnhorst; it is the hope of all!"

"And it shall be fulfilled," exclaimed Schill.

"Brutus does not sleep. He is awake, and ready for action. I swear it by this precious gift of my queen!" He drew the memorandum-book from his bosom. Solemnly laying his hand on it, and raising his eyes toward heaven, he said: "I swear that I will draw my sword now for the fight of liberty—that I will not sheath it until this sacred cause has been carried to a glorious conclusion, unless forbidden by death longer to serve my queen and country!" He pressed the book against his lips, and then opening it read again Louisa's words. As he turned over the leaves, a scrap of paper fell upon the floor. Picking it up, he saw that it contained a single line written in the same small handwriting: "Der König schwankt; Schill, ziehen sie mit Gott!" * "Yes, Heaven is on our side, to fight for Germany and her noble queen!" exclaimed Schill. "I will depart to-morrow!"

CHAPTER XLVII.

SCHILL TAKES THE FIELD.

THE following afternoon (March 28, 1809) Major Ferdinand von Schill proceeded with his regiment through the streets of Berlin to the Halle gate. The people saluted him everywhere with loud cheers and waving of hats.

Schill thanked them more gravely than he had hitherto done, and marched his soldiers out of the gate. No one was surprised at this; all supposed that he only intended to-day, as he had often done, to drill his troops and to encamp near the city. His adjutants, Bärsch and Lützow, were, however, aware of his plans, and had secretly made preparations to carry them into effect.

The regiment took the road to Potsdam. Major von Schill and his two adjutants rode at its head, and patriotic songs from the soldiers resounded along their march. About half-way between Berlin and Potsdam, near the village of Steglitz, the major stopped his horse, and, with a wave of his sword, ordered the regiment to halt; then to move from the road into the adjoining field, and form in square. The command was obeyed in a few minutes; and Major von Schill, resting in the centre on his chestnut charger, surveyed his men with evident pleasure.

All eyes were turned toward him—all hearts were beating with affection for that man of indomitable courage towering above them. Addressing them, his sonorous voice rang over the welkin as the first notes of a trumpet summoning to the field of blood.

"Soldiers," he said, "comrades! the moment has come to fight the enemy, against whom all our souls are filled with hatred—the despoiler of thrones, who has plunged our fatherland into such distress; who has trampled under foot all the rights of man; to whom no treaty, no peace is sacred, and who is only waiting for an opportunity utterly to destroy the constitution of our country. The perfidious oppressor thus treated Spain, after she had made numerous sacrifices to him in order to preserve peace. He intends to degrade Prussia in the same manner, and not to rest until he has dethroned our beloved king and prostrated the illustrious dynasty of the Hohenzollerns. But never shall he succeed in carrying out so nefarious a plan! Austria, Germany, every patriotic heart is rising against him, and we Prussians cannot remain behind. It is a sacred obligation to fight for the fatherland, for our beloved king, for the queen whom we all worship, a precious token from whom I am now holding in my hand, and for whom we are ready at any hour to die!"

While uttering these words, Schill waved the embroidered memorandum-book, which flashed in the sunbeams as a trophy and pledge of victory.

Shouts burst from the soldiers. "Hurrah!" they cried, "long live the king and the queen! long live Major von Schill!"

"Boys," exclaimed Schill, "will you follow me, and fight for Germany and our king?"

"Yes, we will, we will!" shouted the hussars, drawing their sabres and waving them over their heads.

"Will you swear to stand by your commander to the last extremity?"

"We swear to stand by you to the last!" was the enthusiastic answer, while the soldiers looked exultantly at each other, and exchanged congratulations at the opening of the campaign. But no one had thought of future dangers or the necessities of a soldier's life. They had nothing but their uniforms; leaving in Berlin all their money and clothing, and, unaware of this sudden movement, they had not even taken leave of their parents, wives, and children. Every thing was forgotten in their patriotism, so soon and unexpectedly tested—in their glowing desire to save their country, and gain a name on the field of honor.

The march was continued to Potsdam. There they rested over night, and the servants of the officers joined them in the morning, bringing from the governor of Berlin passports for Schill. The brave little regiment soon after left for an assault

* "The king hesitates; Schill, march with God!"

on the fortress of Wittenberg. It was not taken, but the commander of Wittenberg concluded an armistice with Schill, and permitted him and his soldiers, with their drums beating, to march under the cannon of the fortress, and to pass the bridge built at that place over the Elbe.

On the 2d of May the regiment reached Dessau. The duke had fled, but the inhabitants received the Prussian hussars in the most ardent manner, and hailed Schill as the hero who would free the people from the yoke under which they were groaning.

The expedition was no longer a secret. The joyful news spread: "Schill has taken the field against Napoleon; he has called the Germans to arms, and they will rally around his banner!" He himself believed in success, firmly convinced that it was only necessary for him to issue a proclamation, and the people would rise *en masse*. He resolved to do so from his headquarters at Dessau. No sooner had he reached that city than he hurriedly prepared his call "To the Germans!" The ink was not yet dry, when he took the paper, and, accompanied by his adjutants, went to the house of M. Hormuth, printer to the court, and asked to see him. The printer soon made his appearance, and anxiously asked Schill his business.

"You will please print this proclamation, sir," said Schill, handing him the paper; "it must be ready in an hour."

"Major," said Hormuth, glancing despairingly at the scarcely legible handwriting, "I cannot print it, for I am unable to read it."

"Oh, I will read it to you," exclaimed Schill, and he commenced:

"To the Germans!—Brethren, groaning under the yoke of a foreign nation! the moment has arrived when you are able to break your chains, and to regain the constitution under which you have lived in happiness and prosperity for centuries, until the boundless ambition of a conqueror brought incalculable calamities upon our country. Rise! Be men! Follow me, and we shall again be what we were! Ring the tocsin! Let this signal fan the flame of patriotism in your hearts, and be the death-knell of your oppressors! Take up arms! Scythes and pikes may take the place of muskets. They will soon be replaced by English weapons already arrived. Wielded by strong arms, even the peaceful scythe becomes fatal. Let every one arm himself, and share the glory of the liberators of the fatherland, fighting not only for himself but for the safety and happiness of future generations! He who is cowardly enough to disobey this call, will be consigned to contempt and infamy. No noble German girl will ever bestow her hand upon such a traitor. Courage! God is with us and our just cause. Let the old men pray for us! The armies of Austria are advancing victoriously, notwithstanding the boasts of the French; the brave Tyrolese have already broken their chains; the courageous Hessians have risen, and I am hastening to you at the head of well-tried and skilful soldiers. The just cause will soon conquer, and the ancient glory of our country will be restored. To arms! to arms!

Schill."

"Now, sir," said Schill, "I suppose you will be able to read my handwriting and to print it?"

"Now that I know the contents," said M. Hormuth, shaking his head, "I know also that he who prints this proclamation endangers his life, and that he may lose it just as soon as Palm. Sir, I have a wife and children; I am happy with my family; hence life is dear to me, and I should not like to lose it like poor Palm. He did much less than you ask me to do. He only circulated a pamphlet hostile to the French, but I am to print a proclamation calling upon all Germans to rise in arms against the Emperor of the French. Major, I risk my life by complying with your order."

"What!" exclaimed Schill, angrily; "you are a German, and refuse to serve the holy cause of your country? You refuse to print this proclamation?"

"No, I will print it," said M. Hormuth, slowly; "I will print it, but only on one condition."

"Well, and that condition is—"

"That you, major, be kind enough to hold a pistol to my breast and threaten to shoot me, in case I refuse. You must do so in the presence of my compositors, and give me a written certificate that I yielded only to violence."

"M. Hormuth, you are a very prudent man, and it will afford me great pleasure to fulfil your wishes," said Schill, smilingly, drawing his pistol and aiming at the printer.

"Pray, major, do not cock it, for the pistol might go off," said Hormuth, anxiously. "Now be kind enough to hold it to my breast, and shout in a loud and menacing voice that you will shoot me like a dog if I refuse to print this paper. Distribute also some insulting epithets—call me a coward, a renegade, any thing you can think of, and as loud and threatening as you can."

"Very well, I will do all that," said Schill, laughing, and his adjutants, as well as M. Hormuth himself, joined in the sport.

"Now, let us go to work," said Schill.

"Will you print this proclamation, you miserable coward? Why, you have not pluck enough

to be a German! I ask you, for the last time, will you print the proclamation?"

"Sir, have mercy upon me!" wailed M. Hormuth, in a terrified tone. "I cannot print it. It is impossible, sir; impossible!"

"You villain, I will kill you on the spot if you dare resist me," cried Schill. "I—"

"My compositors will be here presently," said M. Hormuth. "Please go on in the same strain."

"I will shoot you like a dog if you do not obey!"

"Help! help! oh, major, have mercy!"

The doors opened, and there appeared at one door the compositors and pressmen; at the other, Madame Hormuth with her children.

"Will you print my proclamation, you infamous scoundrel?" shouted Schill. "Say no, and I will put a bullet through your cowardly heart!"

"Sir, I cannot; I—"

"Husband, I beseech you!" cried Madame Hormuth, rushing toward him. "Husband, consider what you are doing; think of your children, think of me, and comply with the wishes of the major."

"No! I will die rather than print so seditious a paper!"

"Very well, then, you shall die," said Schill. "You refuse to print, and I will assuredly shoot you."

"M. Hormuth, you may as well yield," said the compositors. "It is prudent to submit to necessity. Besides, we are somewhat interested, for your death would throw us out of work."

"I will yield," said M. Hormuth, sighing. "Take away your pistol, major. I will print your proclamation; but be so good as to certify that I consent only on account of your threats and violence. My workmen will sign the certificate as witnesses, will you not?"

"Yes, certainly, we will cheerfully witness what is true."

"Very well," said M. Hormuth. "Now quick, boys; go to work! Here is the manuscript. Let four compositors take it. Divide the copy into four parts; the composition must be done in fifteen minutes, and the printing in two hours. How many copies do you want, major?"

"Ten thousand."

"Very well, ten thousand copies to be done in two hours. We must remember my life is at stake; for I suppose you will shoot me, major, if we should disappoint you?"

"You may be sure of that. Now give me the pen and ink that I may draw up that certificate for you."

The ten thousand printed copies arrived exactly two hours afterward at the headquarters of Major von Schill, and M. Hormuth, who refused to take any payment for them, received in return a certificate that he had been forcibly compelled to print them.

The brave regiment left Dessau on the following day, still in the joyful hope that the German people would rise, and that a host of warriors would respond to the call for the deliverance of the fatherland. But alas! this hope was not to be fulfilled. The population of the cities and villages received Schill's hussars and their heroic chieftain in the most gratifying manner. His proclamation was read everywhere with unbounded pleasure, but no one dared to follow him; no scythes or pikes were to be seen in the array of this little band of patriots. There was but one glad day for Schill; that was on the 12th of May, when Lieutenant von Quistorp, from Berlin, joined him with a hundred and sixty men, who had left their colors and came with him to reënforce "brave Schill, the liberator of Germany."

But Quistorp brought at the same time bad news. The report of a victory of the Austrians had proved unfounded. The Archduke Charles had obtained no advantages; on the contrary, after a succession of desperate engagements, he was beaten on the 23d of April at Ratisbon, and escaped with the remnant of his army into the Böhmerwald. The Emperor Napoleon had advanced with his victorious forces on the direct road to Vienna.

"If Napoleon takes Vienna," said Schill to himself, "then we shall all perish! But we will still hope and trust; the fortune of war may turn yet. The Emperor of Austria is still in Vienna, and the citizens have sworn to be buried under the ruins of their city rather than open its gates again to the enemy. Let us hope, therefore, and fight." Turning to Quistorp, he continued: "Every thing may yet turn out well. My proclamation may find an echo in the hearts of my Prussian comrades, and they may unite with us. To-day, you, Lieutenant von Quistorp, have arrived with one hundred and sixty men; to-morrow another friend may join us with several thousand. Before long we shall have a considerable army, and this will inspire those still hesitating, and make the timid bold. The larger our force, the firmer will be the confidence of the king, and finally he will freely and openly order all the regiments to join us and commence the struggle."

"Do not hope in the king, major," said Lieutenant von Quistorp, sadly. "The failure of Dörnberg's rising, the defeat of the Archduke Charles, and the new victories of Napoleon, have

made him more irresolute than ever; he is afraid of Napoleon's anger and vengeance, and, more indisposed than ever to incur them, he has publicly and solemnly repudiated your bold movement."

"What has the king done?" exclaimed Schill, turning pale; "what do you know?"

"I know that the king has also issued a proclamation, in which he says that he cannot find words sufficiently forcible to express his disapproval of your illegal and criminal conduct; he calls upon the army not to be seduced by your example, and orders you, and all with you, to be tried by a court-martial."

"That is impossible!" cried Schill, in great excitement; "the king cannot forsake me in so shameful a manner! You have been misinformed, Quistorp; certain persons have tried to deter you from joining me by false reports."

"No," said Quistorp, "you are mistaken. I was already on the march to Arneburg, when, a few miles from here, a courier, under instructions from General Chassot, overtook me. In order to warn me, the general sent me the proclamation of the king, and ordered me to face about immediately and return to my regiment. He added that this was the last order he would issue, for he, as well as General Lestocq, governor of Berlin, had been called, by order of the king, to Königsberg, where both of them were to be tried by a military commission. Here are the papers, major."

Schill glanced over them, and, while reading, his hands trembled. "This is a terrible blow," he said, sighing. "The king proscribes me, and brands me as a traitor and deserter. It is all in vain! Germany is asleep, and our voice will not awaken her; Germany lies in the dust before the French tyrant, and the King of Prussia will punish as traitors those who act courageously! Oh, my country, thou art lost, for thy own princes betray thee!"

He sank despairingly on a chair, and hid his face with his hands. In this attitude he remained, groaning piteously, a prey to his anguish. The adjutants entered the room, but Schill did not notice them. Absorbed in his reflections and forebodings, his mind, as it were, had passed from the contemplation of the present, and beheld nothing but the awful future.

The three young officers, Lützow, Quistorp, and Bärsch, well known for their intrepidity, stood sad and dejected before their brave major.

Suddenly rising from his chair, he said: "I thank you, Lieutenant von Quistorp, for having joined me with your faithful men. Germany will see at least that there are still brave men who do not forsake their country, and if we sacrifice our lives for her, she will at least engrave our names on the tablets of her martyrs. We cannot retrace our steps, my friends; we must advance, though death stare us in the face. This very night we leave Arneburg, and continue our march. We may still succeed in what Dörnberg and Charles have been unable to accomplish. We shall appeal again to the patriotism of the Germans. Perhaps their hearts will practically respond—they may hear our voice and follow us. But if fortune have decided against us, if we succumb without delivering our country, very well! 'An end with terror is better than terror without end!' Before us is honor, and at the worst, a glorious death; behind us, contumely and disgrace. Therefore, forward!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

SCHILL'S DEATH.

Schill was sitting, sad and deserted, at his lonely quarters in Rostock, where, after many adventures, he arrived on the 20th of May. He had succeeded in nothing; fortune had not once been favorable to him. He had intended to turn toward Magdeburg, in hope that its garrison of Westphalian troops would joyously open the gates of the fortress, and declare against King Jerome, who had been forced upon them. But, at a distance of a German mile from the city the columns of the enemy had met him, and an engagement had taken place at Dodendorf. It was in vain that Schill had sent a flag of truce to his German brethren to request them to join him, imploring them not to betray the fatherland for the sake of a French king.

The Westphalians shot the bearer of the flag of truce, and a murderous fire was their only reply. Now began the desperate struggle of brethren against brethren—of Germans against Germans!

Schill was victorious in this battle. He mortally wounded the French commander of the Westphalians, Colonel Vautier; his hussars fought like lions and dispersed the enemy; a hundred and sixty prisoners, several stands of colors, and a large number of small-arms, were the trophies of this brilliant affair. But he was unable to derive any benefit from the Dodendorf victory; fearing lest a larger corps should leave Magdeburg and attack him, he retreated, overwhelmed with grief, for he at last understood that the German

soldiers were deaf to his appeals, and that the Westphalians, faithful to their French king, refused to desert him.

Nor had Schill's second victory, the occupation of Dönritz, been advantageous to him. Moreover, dissensions had arisen among the officers themselves; the regiment, so enthusiastic at first, commenced gradually to lose faith in his ability to succeed in his bold enterprise; the officers insisted on being consulted as to future operations. They refused to yield obedience, and demanded that he should listen to their advice and remonstrances. But resistance rendered him only more determined, and in his obstinacy he frequently rejected prudent counsel, that he might accomplish his own plans. His mind was confused by disappointment, and at length by despair. He was, in fact, unequal to the dangers surrounding him.

Schill was sitting, sad and deserted, at his lonely quarters in Rostock, absorbed in discouraging thoughts, and sighing at the frustration of his hopes. In his hand he held the memorandum-book the queen had presented to him, and read again and again the words she had written: "To brave Major von Schill." Suddenly the door behind him opened, and Lieutenant von Lützow, with his uniform covered with dust, entered the room.

Schill slowly turned his head. "Well, Lützow, have you returned?" he asked. "Were you at Doberan? Did you see the duke?"

"Yes, I was at Doberan."

"And what news do you bring? Bad news, of course! Did you see the Duke of Mecklenburg?"

"No, the duke had given orders to admit neither you nor any of your delegates. He says he will have nothing to do with insurgents and rebels."

"Of course," exclaimed Schill, laughing scornfully, "he is a German prince, and, therefore, cannot adhere to the cause of Germany, but must side with France! Oh, I ought to have known it before. Well, it is all right. What other news do you bring, Lützow?"

"Here, major, is a paper issued by King Jerome of Westphalia. His majesty does you the honor to call you in this proclamation a chief of robbers, a pirate, and a deserter, and commands the military and civil authorities to hunt you down. He also offers a reward of ten thousand francs to him who will bring you dead or alive to Cassel."

"Is that so?" exclaimed Schill, laughing. "Well, M. Jerome attaches a tolerably high value to my head. I am sorry that I am unable to return the compliment. I shall reply this very day to Jerome's proclamation by issuing one to the Germans, and by promising a reward of five dollars for his delivery, living or dead.—What else, lieutenant?"

"The Emperor Napoleon has also issued an edict against Schill and his men. He says in this document: 'A certain Schill, a sort of highway robber, who committed crime upon crime during the last campaign in Prussia, and was rewarded with a captaincy, has deserted with his whole regiment from Berlin, marched to Wittenberg, and surrounded that place. General Lestocq, governor of Berlin, has declared Schill a deserter, and the King of Prussia has given orders to arrest him wherever he can be found, and to put the insurgent on trial before a court-martial.'"

"Yes," murmured Schill, musingly, "the German patriot has become an insurgent, and is to be punished for what he attempted in the salvation of his country. It was quite unnecessary for the emperor to abuse and revile him who boldly opposed his tyranny; the King of Prussia and the governor of Berlin had already done so. And what else does Napoleon say?"

"He orders a corps of observation to be formed on the Elbe, to be commanded by the marshal, Duke of Valmy, and to be sixty thousand strong."

"Sixty thousand men!" exclaimed Schill. "Ah! it seems M. Napoleon has a pretty good opinion of 'that deserter Schill,' inasmuch as he considers him dangerous enough to oppose to him an army of sixty thousand men. Thank you, M. Bonaparte, thank you for this acknowledgment. It is a delightful balm to the tortured heart of the poor Prussian deserter; it restores his courage. Let us advance undauntedly—we may conquer yet. The Germans may awake and rally round the standard of liberty!"

"Alas, Schill, I am afraid your hopes are in vain," said Lützow, sadly. "I am not yet done with my bad news."

"Not yet?" asked Schill, mournfully. "Proceed!"

"Vienna has fallen!"

"Vienna fallen!" cried Schill, in dismay. "Is that really true?"

"It is. The Emperor Francis and his family have fled to Hungary, and the Emperor of the French has again made his triumphant entry."

"And the Viennese did not even try to defend their city?"

"They did try, but soon laid down their arms and submitted quietly to the conqueror. Napoleon has established his headquarters at Schönbrunn,

and issued a proclamation to the Austrians. He calls upon them to be faithful and obedient to him, and disbands the militia of Vienna. A general amnesty is granted to those who surrender their arms."

"A general amnesty," exclaimed Schill, "for the crime they committed in complying with the request of their sovereign to take up arms and defend their country! And what is to be done with those who do not surrender?"

"The houses of both officers and privates of the militia who do not return home within a specified time, are to be burned down, their property confiscated, and themselves tried and punished as rebels."

"Oh," exclaimed Schill, raising his hands, "is there still justice in heaven, or is it also asleep! Is there no ear for our wails, no compassion for our disgrace? What is natural, grows unnatural; honor becomes dishonor; patriotism, rebellion—and Heaven seems to permit it!"

"Yes," said Lützow, with a melancholy smile. "What Ovid said of Cato now becomes true of you: 'The victorious cause pleases the gods, but the vanquished one pleases you!'"

"Yes," murmured Schill, "the vanquished cause pleased Cato! and it shall also please Schill as long as he breathes. It shall please him though his king call him a deserter, and a court-martial pass sentence of death upon him. 'The people of Nuremberg hang none but those they have in custody,' is a proverb often repeated, and I think the people of Königsberg will not shoot a man they cannot catch! I would rather be trampled to death by the horses of the enemy, than pierced by the bullets of my German brethren. The matter is settled, Lützow; let us continue the struggle."

"Continue the struggle?" asked Lützow. "I beseech you, take my advice and do not follow the dictates of courage alone; listen also to those of prudence. It will be utterly useless, Schill; we should husband our strength for better times. We are threatened either by military force, or the rigor of the law. Prussia has drawn up a corps on her frontier to repulse us, if need be, should we come armed; and, if unarmed, she would have us tried by a court-martial. Napoleon's corps of observation is stationed on the boundaries of Saxony and Westphalia, and even the King of Denmark has ordered General von Ewald to march against us."

"The stag has been surrounded, but not yet captured," exclaimed Schill. "There is still a place where he may escape. The King of Sweden has not yet a corps in the field against us, and Stralsund is occupied only by a garrison of scarcely three hundred men, commanded by General Candras. Let us march thither and surprise the fortress. When Stralsund is ours, we are on the sea-shore, and in communication with the British; we have ships in the harbor, on which, if every thing else should fail, we could find an asylum, and hasten to England."

"But suppose we should not take Stralsund?" asked Lützow. "How could we escape? I beseech you, listen to reason, consider our hopeless situation; save yourself—save the poor soldiers who have reposed confidence and hope in you! Let us embark for England. There are well-nigh thirty ships in the harbor of Warnemünde; if they refuse to take us on board, we can compel them."

"No," exclaimed Schill, vehemently. "We shall do just as I said—march to Stralsund and take the fortress. But Lieutenant Bärsch is to seize twenty of the ships at Warnemünde and embark on them our baggage, the sick, and the military chest, and convey them to the island of Rügen. We start to-morrow and take Stralsund. That is my plan, and it must be accomplished!"

And Schill's plan was accomplished. He marched his hussars to Stralsund, and for a moment fortune smiled on him. The French commander, General Candras, preferred to meet the enemy in the open field instead of awaiting him behind the half-decayed fortifications. He marched against Schill with the whole garrison and a battery of light artillery; but the Prussian hussars, with a shout attacked the enemy, and dispersed them, took six hundred prisoners, and made their triumphant entry into Stralsund.

"And here let us conquer or die," said Schill to his officers, who were standing around him. "Friends, brethren! the day of success is at hand, and Stralsund is the first token. Let us remain here; throw up intrenchments against the enemy, and wait for the succor which England has so often promised."

"Let us not wait for this succor," said one of the officers; "let us meet it."

"Every hour of delay increases the danger," exclaimed another. "If we do not now embrace the opportunity—if we do not start without delay, and meet the English squadron in the open sea, or hasten to the Swedish shore, we must inevitably perish."

"It would be foolhardiness to remain here for the enemy's superior force to attack us," said a third. "To struggle against such odds is folly, and prudent men submit to the decrees of fortune,

instead of resisting them in a spirit of childish petulance."

"Let us husband our resources for a future day," said a fourth. "It will come when Germany, which is repudiating us now, will stand in need of our assistance, and call us to her side. Let us preserve ourselves for more favorable prospects, and a greater probability of success."

Schill looked angrily on his officers. "Is there no one who will raise his voice against these opinions?" he asked. "Is there no one who will reply to the timid and desponding, in the name of honor, courage, and patriotism?"

All were silent; a murmur of indignation was the only reply. "Well, then," exclaimed Schill, ardently, "I will myself speak against you all; I will tell you that it is cowardly to flee from danger, and to think of defeat instead of victory; that it is perfidious to desert our country when in danger, to save one's own miserable life. Accursed be he who thinks of flight and of forsaking the great cause which we are serving! We must hold Stralsund to the last man. We must make it a German Saragossa, and lie dead beneath the ruins of the city rather than surrender. Let us repair the fortifications, throw up new earthworks, and await the enemy behind the intrenchments. This is my resolution; I will not suffer contradiction, but treat as rebels and mutineers those who dare to act contrary to my orders! The soldiers obey me, and I am their commander. But such of the officers as do not wish to participate longer in the struggle; who, instead of remaining true to their duty, prefer to save their lives by flight, are at liberty to do so. I will not prevent them from making their escape; they may embark on one of the ships in the harbor, and flee whither they desire. Let them remember, however, that they will leave their dishonor here, and will not participate in the glory which posterity may grant as the only conqueror's crown to poor Schill and his faithful men. Let such as desire to flee step forth and receive their discharge." A long pause ensued. No one advanced.

"We agreed to serve under the leadership of Major von Schill," at last said the oldest officer, in a grave, solemn voice; "we have sworn to fight under him against the enemies of our country, to remain with him to the last, and to obey his orders. We shall fulfil our oath, and not faithlessly desert the banner which we have hitherto followed. Let Major von Schill consider, however, that he is responsible for the lives of all those who have united their destiny with his own, and that his conscience, God, and posterity, will judge him, if instead of preserving them he should lead them to an inglorious death or captivity. If Major von Schill is unwilling to listen to prudence—if he refuses to embark and escape with us, we will all remain, and, with him, await our fate. Speak, then, major, will you go with us or remain?"

"I will remain," exclaimed Schill, energetically. "I will await the enemy; I will conquer or die on German soil. Oh, friends, comrades, do not speak to me of flight or submission; Schill does not flee, Schill does not submit! I have tried to arouse my country; I have stretched out my hand toward my countrymen, and said to them, 'I will assist you in shaking the sleep from your half-closed eyes. Rise! and I will lead you in the path of liberty and honor. My arm is strong, and my sword is sharp; unite with me, and let us expel the tyrant!' But Germany did not listen to my appeal; she is still sleeping too soundly, and God did not decree that I should accomplish my task. Perhaps Providence may intend that you and I shall strengthen the cause of liberty by shedding our blood—our death will awaken the sleepers, that they may avenge us. The Germans entertain great admiration for the dead. It is only toward the living that they are cold and reserved. Brethren, let us die for liberty if we cannot live for it. Let us remain united in life and death!"

"Yes, united in life and death!" exclaimed all the officers, and they thronged around Schill to shake hands with him, and to assure him of their fidelity.

Four days of repose and peace followed.—Schill profited by them to repair the decayed intrenchments and fortifications, and made all necessary preparations for an obstinate defence against the approaching enemy.

On the 31st of May, early in the morning, while the major was reviewing his troops in the market-place, wild shouts were heard in the streets. They drew nearer and nearer. Soldiers were rushing toward Schill, and behind them, at some distance, others in red uniforms became visible.

A flash of joy kindled the patriot's face. "The English," he exclaimed, in a loud voice, "see their red coats! The English have landed, and are coming to our assistance!"

"The English are coming!" echoed the exultant soldiers.

"No, no," gasped one of the guards, who had just reached the market-place, "the Dutch are coming—it is the enemy! They surprised us at the Knieper gate, dispersed our infantry, and penetrated into the city. See! their assaulting columns

are already advancing! Let every one escape as he can!"

"It is the enemy!" exclaimed Schill, vaulting on his horse. "Come, brethren, let us meet them. The cavalry will remain here as our reserve. The other troops will follow me to the Triebseer gate!" And he galloped into the narrow street leading to the gate, followed by his men. He was a picture of heroism as he rode at the head of his band, with his hair streaming in the wind, and his countenance beaming with courage. Turning with a smile to Lieutenant Alvensleben, who was riding at his side, "Oh," he said, "it seems to me as though a heavy load had been removed from my breast, and I could breathe freely again. The decisive struggle is at hand, and burdensome life will be resigned with joy. I shall die, my friend, die. Hurrah! forward! liberty is beckoning to me, glorious liberty!"

He spurred his horse and galloped more rapidly, Alvensleben remaining at his side.

"Friend," exclaimed Schill, further on, "when I am no more, defend me against my enemies, and greet my friends! Take my last oath of fealty to the queen, and my last love-greeting to Germany, when she is free. Hurrah! there comes the enemy! Let us sing an inspiring song!" And he sang in a loud voice:

"Tod du süsser, für das Vaterland!
Süsser als der Brautgruss, als das Lallen
Auf dem Mutterschooss des ersten Kindes,
Sei mir willkommen!"

"*Willkommen!*" he cried again, and galloped more rapidly past the Dutch soldiers, who were just emerging from a side-street and cut him off from Alvensleben and his other followers. The enemy, commanded by the Dutch General Carteret, was also approaching from the opposite street. The patriot galloped into the midst of the staff—his sabre flashed, and the general fell from his horse as if struck by lightning. Schill turned when he was unable to penetrate through this body of men obstructing the street. But another battalion had already formed behind him and cut him hopelessly off from assistance. His own men tried to reach him. Shouts, oaths, cries of defiance and fury, with the groans of the dying, rent the air.

Schill saw that he was lost, that he was no longer able to save himself, his faithful men, or his fatherland! There was no escape for him. Death was howling around him on all sides, panting for its prey. Suddenly the column of the enemy opened; he saw the gap, and spurred his horse with a desperate effort, making him leap into the midst of the enemy. The Dutch soldiers fell back in dismay, and Schill galloped by them into Fähr Street. Forward, as on the wings of a tempest, he hastened to the assistance of his men. A bullet hissed past him—another shot was fired. He wavered in the saddle; the bullet had struck him! A detachment of Dutch soldiers were just coming up the street. The man heading them saw the pale Prussian officer, who was scarcely able to retain his seat.

"It is Schill! it is Schill!" he cried out, rushing forward.

"Hurrah, it is Schill!" shouted the others, aiming their muskets at him. Three shots were fired. The brave Prussian still kept the saddle, but his hand dropped the bridle, and the horse stood still. The Dutch chasseurs surrounded and cut him down. He lay helpless on the ground—that herculean man. He was still alive; his eyes, that had so beamed with courage, cast their last glance toward heaven, and his lips, that smiled so sweetly, murmured, "*Tod du süsser für das Vaterland!*" A powerful sabre-stroke at last ended his life. His enemies despoiled his body, tearing off his decorations, and robbing him of a small crown of pearls and the memorandum-book, both gifts of the queen whom he loved so well, and for whom he fought so bravely. They seized the corpse and dragged it along the street in order to present it to their general. His hands were besmeared with mire; his uniform torn by the brutal grasp of the conquerors, and his gory head trailed along the pavement. He was at last deposited in the vestibule of the city hall, where the meat-merchants of Stralsund trade on market days.

A butcher's bench was the catafalque of unfortunate Ferdinand von Schill, the martyr of German liberty! There he lay, a horrible spectacle, with broken limbs, a face deformed by bruises and sabre-gashes, and his eyes glaring to heaven as if in accusation of the ignominy of his death, and the brutality of his enemies.

CHAPTER XLIX.

THE PARADE AT SCHÖNBRUNN.

NAPOLEON'S great victory at Wagram had put an end to the war with Austria, and destroyed only too speedily the hopes which the battle of Aspern or Esslingen had awakened in the hearts of the Germans.

The Archduke Charles had gained at Aspern

half a victory; and the fact that the Austrians had not been beaten—that Napoleon had been compelled to fall back with his army and to take refuge on the island of Lobau, was regarded as a victory, which was announced in the most boastful manner. But if it was a victory, the Austrians did not know how to profit by it. Instead of uniting their forces and attacking Lobau, where the French army was encamped, huddled together, and exhausted by the long and murderous struggle—where the French grenadiers were weeping over the death of their brave leader, Marshal Lannes, Duke of Montebello—where the wounded and defeated were cursing for the first time the emperor's insatiable thirst for conquest—instead of surrounding the French army, or opening a cannonade upon them, the Archduke Charles fell farther back from the right bank of the Danube, and allowed his exhausted troops to rest and recover from the fatigue of the terrible battle that had lasted two days. While the Austrians were dressing their wounds, the French profited by the delay, and built new bridges, procured barges, left the island that might have been a graveyard for them, and reorganized their shattered forces.

On the 6th of July, Napoleon took revenge at Wagram for the two days of Aspern, and wrested again from the Archduke Charles the laurels won at the latter place. Germany was in ecstasies after the battle of Aspern, but she bowed her head mournfully after that of Wagram.

Napoleon was again the master of Germany; and Austria, like the rest of the country, had to bow humbly to his imperious will. The "first soldier of Aspern," brave Prince John of Lichtenstein, was sent to Napoleon's headquarters at Znaim to request an armistice and the opening of peace negotiations. Napoleon, whose armies were exhausted, whose attention, besides, was absorbed by the war in Spain, and who had found out at his late battles what resistance was now beginning to be made in Germany, granted the request, consented to a cessation of hostilities, and that the envoys of France and Austria should agree upon terms of peace.

These negotiations had already been carried on for months, and no conclusion had yet been arrived at. Vienna was still a French city, and the Viennese had to submit to the rule of a new governor, and to the galling yoke imposed on them by a foreign police, who kept a close surveillance over every action—nay, every expression and look. They had to bow to stern necessity, and to celebrate Napoleon's birthday, the 15th of August, by festivities and an illumination, as though it were the birthday of their own sovereign.

Napoleon was still residing at Schönbrunn, at the palace which Maria Theresa had built, and where she had signed the marriage-contract of her daughter Marie Antoinette with the Dauphin of France. Marie Antoinette had been guillotined, and the heir of the Revolution and of the French crown was now dwelling at her mother's palace.

Every morning the French Emperor reviewed his guards in the large palace-yard, and thousands of the inhabitants of Vienna hastened regularly to Schönbrunn in order to see him and witness the parade. These morning reviews had become a favorite public amusement, and, when listening to the music of the French bands, and beholding the emperor (in his gray coat, with his broad brow covered with the three-cornered hat) gallop down the ranks of his troops, followed by the brilliant staff of his marshals and generals, amid shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur*," the kind-hearted citizens sometimes forgot that it was their enemy who was displaying his power, and rejoicing in his ambition; instead of cursing, they admired him and his veterans, whose scars were the signs of many a victory.

Napoleon was but too well aware of the influence which these parades were exerting on the minds of the people; he knew the fascination which his person produced not only on his soldiers, but the public generally, and he wished to profit by it, in order to conquer the civilians after conquering their army. Every one, therefore, had free access, and the subtle invader had always a kind glance and an affable smile with which to win their hearts.

On the 13th of October, as usual, a parade was to be held; and the road leading to Vienna was early covered with carriages, horsemen, and pedestrians, hastening to Schönbrunn. Among those hurrying along the high-road was a man of whom no one took any notice, with whom no one was conversing, and who, while all around were laughing, and speaking of the parade, was pursuing his way in grave silence. His youthful countenance was sad and pale; long, light hair was waving round his oval face. His eyes seemed on fire, and his thin, half-parted lips were quivering as though he were a prey to intense emotion. He was wrapped in a large black cloak reaching nearly to his feet; a small black velvet cap covered his head. This strange figure looked like an apparition in the midst of the chatting crowd, the elegant carriages, and dashing horsemen. All were too busily engaged with themselves, with the review, which was to be particularly brilliant, and with

the emperor, who was not only to be present, but to command the troops.

A few persons referred also to the hopes entertained of a speedy conclusion of peace, and regretted that they had not yet been fulfilled, while others conversed stealthily about the victories of the Tyrolese, and of noble and brave Andrew Hofer, who, with his faithful mountaineers, still dared to resist the French conqueror. The young man listened gravely and silently to all this conversation.

It was yet early when he reached the palace; for the Viennese were anxious to get good places, and to be as near the emperor as possible, and therefore they had set out several hours before the parade was to commence.

The young man glanced with an evident air of disappointment over the large, unoccupied space which lay before him, and on which as yet not a man of the imperial guard was to be seen. "Will there be no parade to-day?" he asked a corpulent citizen of Vienna, who was standing at his side.

"Certainly, sir, there will be one," said the citizen, with a self-important air. "But it is very early yet, and an hour may elapse before the emperor makes his appearance."

"An hour yet!" exclaimed the young stranger, indignantly. "I was told I had to be here early in order to witness the spectacle."

"You were correctly informed, sir. For if you want to see any thing, it is necessary to be here at this hour to secure a good place. Besides, the time you will have to wait will not be very tedious. The various regiments that are to participate in the parade will soon make their appearance; then come the imperial guards, who form in line, and, finally, the emperor with his marshals. Oh, you ought to hear the shouts, the music of the band, and the roll of the drums when he appears! You will certainly hear the noise, provided it does not make you deaf."

"I think it will not," said the young man, with a mournful smile. "But tell me, shall we be able to see the emperor very near? From which door will he make his appearance, and where does he generally take his position?"

"He comes generally from the large portal yonder; it is there that he mounts on horseback; he then rides down the front of the soldiers, and halts a short time just here, where we are standing. Those who desire to say any thing to him, or to deliver petitions, had better do so on this very spot. But come, let us go a little farther into the palace-yard, that we may see better."

"Very well, lead the way. I will follow," said the young man.

"Come, then, sir." And the kind-hearted citizen of Vienna elbowed himself through the crowd.

The young conspirator followed him a few steps, and then halted. Instead of advancing farther he slipped back to his former place.

"No," he muttered to himself, "I must not stand close to, or converse with any one. I must be alone and an utter stranger, so as to cast suspicion on no one else, and not to endanger the lives of innocent persons. The glory of the deed will belong to me alone, if it should succeed; let the penalty be inflicted on me alone, if it should fail." He withdrew farther from the citizen who had spoken to him so courteously, and when he had entirely lost sight of him, he approached the palace cautiously and from the opposite side. "The blow must be struck at once," he muttered. "Every delay will involve me in fresh dangers, and my fate might be the same as that of the two brethren who drew the black balls last year. I drew the lot this time, and must accomplish what they were unable to perform."

The youthful stranger raised his eyes toward heaven, and a solemn earnestness beamed from his countenance. "Yes, I swear it by the memory of Anna, and the tears she will soon shed for me, that I will not, like those two brethren, shrink from striking the blow. I drew the lot, and the president must repair the fault committed by them. I must destroy the tyrant! Heaven, hear my oath and let my plan succeed!" He elbowed himself quickly through the crowd, and approached closer to the entrance of the palace. Once, in the midst of the surging mass, his cloak was accidentally displaced, and something like a dagger-blade flashed from under it; but hastily arranging his cloak, he glanced around with an air of uneasiness. No one paid any attention to him, for all eyes were fixed on the imperial guard marching into line with a proud step, conscious that they were the favorites of the greatest general of the age, and the terror of the battle-field.

CHAPTER L.

NAPOLEON AT SCHONBRUNN.

WHILE the regiments were forming in the palace-yard below, and the spectators were thronging about them, Napoleon was still in his cabinet. But he was not alone. Some of his adjutants and marshals were with him, and stood, like the emperor, in front of a table covered with strange

articles. There lay a leg encased in a magnificent boot, a hand covered with a white glove, an arm clad in the sleeve of a uniform, by the side of which was a foot cut off close above the ankle, and encased in a neat shoe.

Napoleon contemplated these things with grave glances, and then turned his eyes toward a small man who was standing in humble attire and attitude, and who was no other than the celebrated mechanician and inventor of the metronome, Leonard Mälzl. "You are a genius indeed!" said the emperor, with an air of genuine admiration; "people did not say too much in calling you the most skilful member of your profession. You really suppose that it is possible to walk with such a leg?" And the emperor pointed at that lying on the table.

"Sire, I do not only suppose it, I know it," said M. Mälzl, gravely; "a man may use these limbs and feet as easily and naturally as though he were born with them. Please be so kind, your majesty, as to look at this." M. Mälzl took the article and placed it in front of a chair. "Your majesty sees that it is a foot with about half a leg. It is fastened with these two suspenders, that are thrown over the shoulders, and a man may then walk with it."

"Yes, walk, but he would not be able to sit down."

"Yes, he would, sire; you touch this spring, and—your majesty sees, the knee bends and the upper part drops on the chair."

"So it does!" exclaimed Napoleon, joyously, but suddenly his brow became dark and his eyes gloomy. "Alas," he said, thoughtfully, "were Lannes still alive, I might have at least offered him a substitute for the limbs he lost." He stared at the ingenious work, and stroking his face quickly said, "You assert, also, sir, that a man may use that hand, and hold any thing with it?" asked Napoleon, lifting up the neatly-gloved hand.

"Sire, it is just as good as one new-grown.—The human will controls every limb and moves these artificial fingers just as well as the natural ones. Will your majesty be so kind as to order me to take something from the table with this hand which you see now stretched out?"

The emperor drew a ring, adorned with a large diamond, from his finger, and laid it on the table. "Let the machine pick up this ring," he said.

Mälzl took the hand, and, touching the spring fixed at the wrist, the fingers bent immediately and seized the ring. Napoleon looked humorously at his astonished marshals and generals. "Now, gentlemen," he said, "we need no longer be afraid of bullets, for if we lose the hands and feet that God has given us, we can replace them by those made by Mr. Mälzl."

"Sire," said Mr. Mälzl, smiling, "will you convince yourself that my artificial hand cannot merely pick up, but also retain an object? Will your majesty try to take the ring from it?"

Napoleon seized the ring, but the fingers held it with irresistible tenacity. "Indeed, these are very sensible fingers," exclaimed Napoleon; "they do not give up what they once get hold of."

"Yes, sire, they will. I touch this spring, and the fingers open again."

"No, no," exclaimed the emperor, "let them keep this time what they have, and wear the ring as a memento. I will allow them only to deliver it to their maker, who knows not only how to use his own hands so skilfully, but also to manufacture serviceable ones for others. No thanks, sir! we are greatly indebted to you, and not you to us, and it certainly behooves me to thank you in the name of the brave soldiers whose lost limbs you replace so ingeniously. When the precious day of peace will come, people will be able to do without your invention, but I am afraid we shall not live to see that day. We are, I fear, always exposed to the horrors of war. Hence, your invention is a blessing that cannot be appreciated too highly, for, thanks to you, there will be fewer cripples and unsightly wooden legs. I shall issue orders to select five of the bravest and most deserving invalids from every regiment of my army, and you will restore to them their lost arms, legs, and hands, at my expense. Indeed, sir, you imitate the Creator, and the wonder would be complete if you knew also how to replace lost heads."

"Sire, I do know that, too," said Mälzl, smiling.

"Yes, a head of wax or painted wood!"

"No, sire, a head that moves, opens, and closes its eyes, and—thinks."

"A head that thinks?" exclaimed Napoleon, laughing. "Ah, that is a pretty strong assertion, which you could hardly prove."

"Pardon me, your majesty, I engage to furnish the proof."

"How so?"

"If your majesty will acknowledge that one must think in order to play a game of chess, then the artificial man in my possession is able to think."

"Where have you that man with the thinking head?"

"Sire, I have caused my assistants to set it up in the adjoining room. But I must observe that

this man was not made by myself; it is the master-piece of the late Mr. Kempeler, a well-known mechanician, of whose son I bought my slave."

"Ah," said Napoleon, laughing, "do you not know that the trade in human chattels is now prohibited in our civilized states? But let us see your slave.—Come, gentlemen," added Napoleon, turning toward his marshals and adjutants, "let us look at the work of this modern Prometheus." He walked toward the door, but, before leaving the cabinet, he turned to the chamberlain: "When the Duke de Cadore comes, bring me word immediately." He then stepped into the adjoining room, and the marshals and Mr. Mälzl followed him.

In the middle of the room, at a small table, on which was a chess-board, sat a neatly-dressed male figure, looking like a boy fourteen years old.

"That, then, is the celebrated chess-player," remarked Napoleon, advancing quickly. "The face is made of wax, but who will warrant that there is not a human countenance concealed under it, and that this prepossessing and well-proportioned form does not really consist of flesh and blood?"

"Sire, this will convince your majesty that such is not the case," said Mälzl, touching a spring on the neck of the automaton, and taking the head from the trunk.

"You are right," exclaimed Napoleon, laughing, "I am fully convinced. It is true many men are walking about without heads, but they are not so honest as to reveal the fact so openly as your automaton does."

"Sire, will your majesty grant the favor of playing a game of chess with him?" asked Mälzl, fastening on again the head of the automaton.

"What! the thing will dare to play a game of chess with me?"

"With your majesty's permission."

"And alone?"

"Yes, sire; your majesty will permit me, however, to take position behind the chair?"

"Certainly. I see the chessmen are already on the board; let us commence." The emperor sat down opposite the automaton, and saluted it with a pleasant nod.

"Well, comrade, let us commence," said Napoleon.

The automaton made a graceful bow, and beckoned to the emperor with its uplifted right hand, as though he wished him to commence.

"Well, I shall commence," said Napoleon, advancing a pawn.

The automaton took the pawn in front of the king and advanced it two squares. The emperor made another move, and so did his opponent. Looking smilingly at the figure, Napoleon played his black bishop as a knight, occupying the oblique white square. The automaton, shaking its head, put the bishop on the square it ought to occupy.

"Ah, it does not like cheating," exclaimed Napoleon, laughing; "it is a very earnest and conscientious player." And the emperor made another move. The automaton continued the game. Another attempt was made to cheat by moving the castle in an oblique direction. His adversary took the castle with an impetuous gesture and placed it aside like a pawn it had won.

"It very properly punishes me," said the emperor. "We must play seriously."

The game proceeded. It became more and more intricate; the chances were soon in favor of the automaton, and the emperor was in danger of losing the game. Forgetting who was his antagonist, he remembered only that he was about to lose a game, and became serious. He played hastily, and for the third time tried to cheat by moving a knight contrary to the rules. The automaton shook its head vehemently, and upset the whole chess-board.

"Ah, it refuses to continue the game," exclaimed Napoleon; "it despises my swindling, and forgets that it is itself a swindle. You may be thankful, M. Mälzl, that we are no longer in the middle ages; formerly they would have burned you at the stake as a sorcerer, attempting to do what God alone is able to do."

"Sire, permit me to repeat that this machine was not made by myself, but by Kempeler. But I hope your majesty will permit me to show you my own automaton, and allow it to indulge in a little music before you."

"Where is it?"

"Here," said Mälzl, opening the closed curtains of one of the windows, and pointing at the handsome figure visible behind them.

"Ah, a postilion!" exclaimed Napoleon, "and it will blow us a tune on the bugle?"

"Sire, it begs leave to play the *Marseillaise* to your majesty," said Mälzl, moving the figure on rollers into the middle of the room.

"Let it commence," said Napoleon.

The postilion raised its arm, seized the bugle hanging on a silken string around its neck, put it to its mouth and commenced blowing.

At this moment the door of the cabinet opened; the chamberlain entered and approached the emperor. "Sire," he said, "the Duke de Cadore has just arrived and begs to be admitted."

"Conduct him immediately into my cabinet," replied Napoleon, rising hastily. He then beckoned the mechanician to his side. "Let your postilion still play to the marshals. As to your chess-player, I must buy it of you. You may apply to Grand-Marshal Duroc for the money. In order to punish the automaton for nearly beating me at the game, I will buy it, and it is henceforth to be my slave." *

"Sire, that is no punishment, but a reward, for which I beg leave to thank you in the name of my chess-player."

"You have invented a most acceptable substitute for such of my invalids as have lost arms or legs," said the emperor; "now you must invent something else for me, and come to the assistance of the wounded on the battle-field. Make me the model of an ambulance into which the disabled can be placed safely and comfortably, and which is arranged in such a manner that it may be taken asunder and transported on horseback with the train of the army. You are an inventive genius, and I shall expect you with your model in the course of a week. Now let your postilion blow again. Good-by!" He waved his hand kindly to the mechanician, and then hastened back into his cabinet. The Duke de Cadore was there already, and saluted the emperor with a low bow.

"Well, Champagny," exclaimed Napoleon, quickly, "do you not yet bring us peace?"

"No, sire, the ambassadors of Austria refuse peremptorily to accept the terms proposed to them."

"Ah," exclaimed the emperor, menacingly, "those Austrians believe they can bid me defiance. They have not yet been humbled enough, although I have defeated their army, foiled the plans of their commander-in-chief, expelled their emperor from his capital, and am residing at his palace. They wish for further humiliations, and they shall have them. If they do not change their mind very speedily, I shall send for the Grand-duke of Würzburg and adorn his head with the imperial crown of Austria."

"Sire, that would be replacing one puppet by another, but not removing the men pulling the wires; and they are all animated by the same spirit. Prince Lichtenstein and Count Bubna are no less inflexible than was Count Metternich. It is true they have already yielded in some points, and declared to-day that the Emperor Francis had authorized them to accept some of the conditions proposed."

"Which?" asked Napoleon, hastily.

"The emperor is ready to cede to France Dalmatia and Croatia, the territories demanded by your majesty."

"Well!" exclaimed Napoleon, "we obtain thereby the chief point. I shall extend the territory of France to the Save, and become the immediate neighbor of Turkey. Let the Emperor of Russia try then to carry his plans against Constantinople into effect: France will know how to protect her neighbor, and her troops will always be ready to defend the Porte. When I have extended my frontiers into the interior of Dalmatia and Croatia, Russia's influence in the Orient is paralyzed, and France will be all-powerful in Constantinople. What is it that Austria refuses after granting our principal demands?"

"Sire, she consents further to cede to Bavaria part of Upper Austria, namely: Salzburg, Berchtesgaden, and part of the district of the Inn and Hausruck, but she refuses to give up one-half of Upper Austria, which we claimed; she refuses further to cede to Saxony such large territories in Bohemia, and to Russia in Galicia, as was demanded by your majesty."

"We may yield a little as to these points," said Napoleon. "It is always better to make exorbitant demands, because it is easier then to abate, and appear accommodating. I do not attach, moreover, any great value to the enlargement of Bavaria, Saxony, and Russia. Only the aggrandizement of France by the extension of our frontiers to the boundaries of Turkey was to be the object of our ambition. Having attained this, we will yield as to the cession of other territories, and be satisfied with less, provided that Austria accept unreservedly and fully the two other conditions I refer to."

"Your majesty refers to the reduction of the Austrian army, and the war contribution of one hundred millions of francs, which we have demanded."

"Which we have demanded, and which must be paid, unless they wish me to resume hostilities," said Napoleon, menacingly.

"Sire, these are the two points as to which Austria shows the greatest reluctance," said Champagny, shrugging his shoulders. "She contends that a reduction of her army, brought about by the imperious demands of France, is incompatible with the honor and dignity of her emperor; and further, that she is unable to pay a war contribution of one hundred millions of francs."

"She dares then to reject my demands!" exclaimed Napoleon, with a gloomy air. "She will

* This chess-player, which Napoleon bought of Mälzl, remained at the Villa Bonaparte, near Milan, until 1812, when it was removed to Paris, where it is at the present time.

compel me to recommence the war for the sake of a few miserable millions of francs!"

"Sire, Austria makes counter-propositions, and hopes that an understanding will be arrived at. She promises to reduce her army considerably in the course of six months, to disband the militia, and to place the regiments on a peace footing. She further offers one-half of the sum which we have demanded, namely, fifty millions."

"And she believes that I will be satisfied with that?" said Napoleon. "She attempts to beat me down as though I were a British shopkeeper? She dares to offer me one-half, and talks to me about the honor and dignity of her emperor! As if it did not depend on me to trample under foot his honor and dignity, and to cast the imperial crown of Austria into the waves of the Danube, or to place it on my own head, just as I prefer!"

"Sire, I believe the Emperor Francis is fully aware of the danger menacing him, and he is conscious, too, that his dynasty is at stake in these negotiations. I do not believe, therefore, that hostilities will break out again, owing to his reluctance to submit to these two conditions."

"I shall not yield," said Napoleon, "although it seems to me disgraceful to commence another war for the sake of fifty millions, and when I know that my own army is in need of repose. I—" The emperor interrupted himself, and listened to the clock, which struck twelve. "Indeed, it is already twelve o'clock! My guard must have been waiting for me in the palace-yard for some time." He stepped to the window and looked down. "My splendid guard has already formed in line," he said, "and there is a vast crowd of spectators from Vienna to see the parade."

"To see your majesty," corrected Champagny, approaching the window at a sign made by the Napoleon.

"Just look at that crowd!" said the emperor, smiling. "There are at least three thousand men who have come hither to see me and my soldiers, and they do not belong exclusively to the lower classes, as is proved by the large number of carriages, the numerous elegant horsemen, and by the windows yonder." He pointed at the windows of the opposite wing of the palace; and when the minister turned his eyes, he beheld a large number of ladies, whose toilet seemed to indicate that they belonged to the higher classes of society.

"See!" said the emperor, "that beautiful lady in the ermine dress; it is the Princess von Fürstenberg, and the lady at her side is the wife of Field-Marshal von Bellegarde. They requested Bausset to lend them one of his windows, that they might witness the parade. The ladies at their side are all members of the highest aristocracy, and the citizens and the populace generally are in the yard below. You see, these good people regard us no longer as enemies; they love and esteem us, and perhaps it would be wisest and best for me to claim the crown of Austria in order to put an end to all further quarrels. The Austrians, it seems to me, would be content with it. Well, we shall see further about it! I will not make the ladies, the populace, and, above all, my soldiers, wait longer. You may remain here in my cabinet. There is a note on the table which I want you to finish. I shall return soon."

The emperor took his hat, and, opening the door leading into the adjoining room, he called out: "Gentlemen of the staff—to the parade!"

CHAPTER LI.

FREDERICK STAPS.

THE bands played, and shouts of "*Vive l'Empereur!*" burst from the troops. Napoleon had emerged from the palace door, and the welcome was as a sunbeam brightening his cold and emotionless face. He slowly descended the steps of the outside staircase, with his eyes on the soldiers, and he did not notice the young man who stood below, presenting to him a petition with his left hand, while he concealed his right under his cloak.

"Sire," said the young man, loudly and urgently, "sire, here is a petition, and I request your majesty to listen to me for a moment. I—"

Napoleon passed on the other side without having heard these words. The youth, holding the petition still in his hand, was about to follow him, but Marshal Bessières, who walked behind, kept him back. "If you present a petition to the emperor," he said, "wait here until the parade is over, when he will return this way." The marshal proceeded, but the young man took no notice of his order, and mingled boldly with the emperor's suite.

General Rapp at length laid his hand on the youth's shoulder, and said:

"Sir, you must withdraw. This is no place for you."

"I have to present a petition to the emperor which cannot be delayed," said the young man, in a gentle voice, "pray permit me to give it to him at once."

"I tell you it is out of place here," exclaimed

the general, vehemently. Beckoning to one of the second lieutenants, he said: "Conduct this man away from here."

"Come, sir," said the lieutenant; "stand back, soldiers; let this man pass." In spite of himself, he was soon hurried to the rear.

"I must attain my object—I must fulfil my oath," he muttered to himself. "Napoleon must die to-day, and Frederick Staps shall be his executioner. Forward!" He elbowed himself through the crowd that had assembled behind the soldiers, and, standing on tiptoe, tried to descry the emperor and his marshals while walking into the semicircle formed by the troops.

No one noticed that, seeing a passage in the ranks of the soldiers, Staps advanced, cautiously and quickly as a snake, until he was again inside the semicircle. "Fate is favorable to me," he muttered, "and the moment is at hand when I will deliver Germany!" He approached the emperor, who was just coming down the front from the other side. "Sire," he exclaimed, stretching out his paper toward Napoleon, "take my petition, and listen to me a few minutes."

The emperor looked for a moment on the pale countenance of the young man. "I do not understand you," he said; "apply to General Rapp."

Staps apparently had not heard Napoleon's words; he approached still closer, and put his right hand under his cloak. "Sire," listen to me," he exclaimed, "I—" A strong hand grasped his arm and pushed him back.

"Did you not hear that you are to apply to General Rapp?" asked Marshal Bessières. "Why did you come the second time to a place where you do not belong? Leave immediately, or you will be arrested!"

"I am going," muttered Staps, and turned to pass through the ranks of the soldiers.

At this moment a dark suspicion arose in the mind of Bessières, for which he was unable to give any good reasons, but which alarmed him. He beckoned to two soldiers, and, pointing at Staps, who was pressing his way outside, he said, "Arrest that man, and bring him hither!" His order was obeyed in a moment, and the soldiers, holding Staps by the arms, dragged him to the marshal, whom the Duke de Rovigo and General Rapp had now joined.

"Why did you have me arrested, general?" asked Staps, in a firm, calm voice.

"Because I distrust you," replied Bessières. "Take off your cloak!"

Staps hesitated. "Take off your cloak!" repeated Bessières; and, not obeying, the soldiers violently tore the cloak from his shoulders, and, as they did so, something flashed. It was the blade of a large knife, in a belt with which he had fastened his black velvet coat.

"He is saved and I am lost!" muttered Staps to himself, and dropped his head on his breast.

"What is the meaning of this knife?" asked General Rapp. "What did you want to do with it?"

Staps slowly raised his head and lifted up his arm to point at the emperor, who was standing but a few steps from them.

"I intended to punish him," he said, solemnly.

"An assassin! an assassin!" cried the marshals, in dismay, thronging around him.

The emperor, perhaps, had heard these cries, for he approached.

"What is going on here?" he asked, as his eyes turned to the pale face of the young man.

"Sire," said Bessières, with an air of horror, "you see here a criminal who was about to assassinate you! Here is the knife with which he intended to perpetrate the deed."

Not a feature of the emperor's countenance changed; not a muscle quivered or betrayed any inward emotion. "Hush," he said, in a low, imperious voice. "Take the man into the palace! I will examine him after the parade is over. Let Savary and Rapp accompany him.—Come, marshals!"

While Savary and Rapp, with the soldiers who surrounded Staps, hastened into the palace, Napoleon, escorted by his marshals, walked slowly down the front. He did not finish the parade a minute earlier than usual. Ascending the staircase, he stood on the landing, and received again the salutations of the military. He then stepped into the lower hall of the palace. But there he accelerated his steps, and, hurrying through the anterooms, entered the apartment contiguous to his cabinet.

An hour had passed since he had admired, in this room, M. Mälzl's chess-player and postilion, and now he looked wonderingly at the young man who had tried to assassinate him. "He is really but a child, and looks very innocent," exclaimed the emperor, shrugging his shoulders; "I do not believe that he is an assassin."

"Sire, here is the knife that was found on his person," said Savary, handing it to the emperor.

"That is, indeed, a strong proof of his intention," replied Napoleon. "But who tells you that this knife was designed for me? I will myself speak to the man. Rapp, are you sufficiently

familiar with the German language to be my interpreter?"

"Yes, sire, I speak German."

"Come, then," said the emperor, quickly approaching Staps, whose hands had been tied behind him.

"Whence do you come, and what is your name?"

"I come from Naumburg, and my name is Frederick Staps," was the calm reply.

"What is your father?"

"He is a clergyman."

"A clergyman! and he has taught his son so little religion! For I am told you intended to assassinate me. Is that true?"

"It was the last means that I had resolved upon to save my unfortunate native land," replied Staps, in a gentle voice. "But before doing so, I was determined to try another."

"What?"

"To implore you, in the name of my country, humanity, and your own future, to give peace to the world," responded Staps, enthusiastically. "I hoped that Heaven would impart strength to my words, so that they would be able to move your heart; that your eyes would see the fountains of blood your accursed hand has opened on the peaceful plains of Germany; that the armies of the dead lying in our fields might satisfy your desire for war. Sire, have mercy on Germany and on yourself! There are thousands of unburied corpses accusing Napoleon as their murderer! Our cities and villages are filled with weeping mothers, and widows, and children, arraigning you as the destroyer of their sons, husbands, and fathers! Sire, have mercy on your own conscience, and restore peace to the world!"

"He is assuredly insane," murmured Napoleon to himself. At this moment he cast his eyes on a miniature, fastened to a string, and lying on the table.

"What locket is that?" he asked.

"Sire," replied Rapp, "we took it from the assassin; he wore it on his neck."

Napoleon examined it. It contained the portrait of a beautiful woman. "Whose portrait is it?"

"Sire," said Staps, in a solemn voice, "it is the portrait of my betrothed—my dearly beloved Anna."

"What!" exclaimed the emperor. "You have a sweetheart—you have a mother and a father—you are in the flower of your life—and yet you intended to commit so horrible a crime! For you will not deny that murder is a crime."

"Murder in ordinary cases is one of the greatest crimes," said Staps, in his calm, gentle voice. "But to take your life—to rid the world of Napoleon—is no murder and no crime; it is an act of justice—nay, it is a sacred duty! If I had killed you, no one would have called me an assassin; my attempt is criminal because it did not succeed. That is what one of our own great poets says concerning certain actions:

> 'Conceived and unsuccessful—there's the crime!
> Accomplished, it becomes a deed immortal.
> And what succeeds will surely be forgiven,
> For God's own verdict lies in the result!'"*

"And God, then, has decided against you," said Napoleon, quickly.

"No, God delays only the execution of the blow, and perhaps I am not the right instrument. He will choose another, and my successors will know better how to find your heart. Believe me, the Germans know how to do their duty; and to rid Germany of her tyrant, and restore peace to her people, is their duty."

"You have read a good deal, I suppose?" asked the emperor. "And it seems books have excited your imagination. What were your favorite works?"

"Sire, historical works," said Staps, calmly. "I derived from them the courage required for my deed."

"You know something of Brutus, then?" asked Napoleon, with a compassionate smile.

"There were two Brutuses. The last Brutus killed the tyrant, and died for liberty. Mankind have not ceased admiring him, as France has not ceased admiring the Maid of Orleans. She delivered her country from its enemies, but she was captured, and perished. I intended to do what that heroic maid did—save my native land from oppression, but God decreed that her destiny, and not her deed, should be mine."

"Does your father know of your folly?"

"Neither he nor my betrothed, nor any one else, knew of my purpose. I came hither alone, and alone I intended to accomplish it. Not until I had succeeded was its revelation to be made. And the news would have come to those I love as a pledge of peace—that the deluge of blood was over, and Germany saved!"

"Your father and your betrothed will now receive bad tidings of you. Are you not afraid of grieving them?"

"Both of them will weep for me—so will many

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* "Gedacht bloss und missglückt—ist's nur ein Frevel,
Vollbracht, ist's ein unsterblich Unternehmen,
Und was nur glückt, das wird dann auch verziehen,
Denn jeder Ausgang—ist ein Gottes-Urtheil!"
SCHILLER.

other Germans, and their tears will water the flowers upon my grave."

"You believe, then, that I shall have you executed?"

"I should consider it but natural for you."

"But it may please me to pardon you. Tell me, in that case, what you would do?"

"Accomplish my purpose," replied Staps, calmly. "I have sworn to kill you. I must fulfil my oath or die!"

"Ah, you have either a morbid mind or a morbid body!" exclaimed Napoleon, vehemently.

"No, I have neither one nor the other," replied Staps, composedly; "my mind is healthy, and so is my body."

"Send for Corvisart," ordered the emperor, turning to his suite. "But let no one dare tell him what is transpiring here."

An adjutant hastened out, and Napoleon turned again to Staps. "Are you a freemason or one of the Illuminati?"

"Neither."

"Did you ever hear of Moreau and Pichegru?"

"I did."

"And what do you think of these men, who tried to take my life?"

"I think that they were afraid of death."

"Did you know Schill and Dörnberg?"

Staps hesitated a moment, and replied: "I knew Schill. I saw him on the day after the battle of Jena, and we swore to devote our thoughts, our energies, and our lives, to the German fatherland, and never to grow weary in our struggle against the tyrant. There were three of us who took this oath. The first was Count Pückler, who shot himself; the second was shot, Ferdinand von Schill; the third will also be shot, Frederick Staps!"

"He is insane," repeated Napoleon, shuddering involuntarily at the tranquillity of the prisoner.

The door opened, and the emperor's physician, M. de Corvisart, entered.

"Corvisart, come hither," the emperor said, vehemently. "Examine this young man, and tell me what is the matter with him." The marshals and generals stepped aside, and the physician approached the prisoner, whose hands had been untied a moment previously. "Examine his pulse, Corvisart; examine him carefully and tell me whether he has a fever, or is insane."

Staps quietly stretched out his hand; Corvisart took it and laid his fingers on the pulse. Silence reigned in the room. The marshals and generals in full uniform surrounded the group; in the midst stood the emperor, whose face was sadder to-day than usual; at his side was Staps, with his gentle countenance and radiant look turned toward heaven, his right hand resting in that of the physician, who marked every pulsation with profound attention.

It was a scene worthy an artist's pencil. All were looking at the physician and waited breathlessly for his decision.

"Sire," said Corvisart, after a long pause, "this young man is in perfectly good health; his pulse is regular; there is nothing indicative of insanity in his eyes; his complexion is good, and in fact there is nothing in his appearance to denote the slightest indisposition."

"Ah," exclaimed Staps, with a triumphant smile, "you see that I was right. I am neither insane nor ill."

Napoleon stamped with anger, as his eyes flashed fire. "He is insane, Corvisart!" he exclaimed; "examine him again."

Corvisart 'did so, and in a short time said: "Sire, I cannot but repeat my previous statement; I do not find a trace of fever or insanity. His pulse is perfectly regular."

"Well, then," said Napoleon, frowning, "this healthy person just tried to assassinate me!"

"Assassinate you!" ejaculated Corvisart in dismay. "Unfortunate young man, what could induce you to attempt such a crime?"

"The misfortunes and sufferings of my country," replied Staps. "I desired to deliver it from the tyrant who has been bringing misery, disgrace, and degradation on Germany for the last ten years. My attempt was vain, but some one else will succeed in what I have failed to accomplish. I have no actual accomplices, but the heart of every German is my accomplice, and the knife which dropped from my hand to-day will fall into another's. All Germany is in conspiracy. You may kill me, but thousands are ready to do what I failed to accomplish."

The emperor indeed listened to such words, but with a dark and angry countenance. He beckoned the Duke de Rovigo to his side.

"Savary," he said, "take this boy away, and subject him to a close examination. Try to discover his accomplices. If he name them, I will pardon him."

"Sire, you have the right to execute me, but I do not give you the right to despise me," exclaimed Staps.

"Take him away!" repeated the emperor, "and report to me what he says." Saluting the marshals with a wave of his hand, and, casting a last glance on Staps, he walked by and

opened the door of the cabinet, where Minister Champagny was awaiting his return.

"Champagny," said the emperor, wearily sitting down on an easy-chair, "did you not tell me the Prince von Lichtenstein had informed you that frequent propositions to assassinate me had been made to him?"

"Yes, sire," replied Champagny, "and the prince told me he had invariably rejected them with horror."

"Nevertheless, an attempt has been made. A young man, scarcely twenty years old, with the face of a sick girl, came hither to-day to stab me with a kitchen-knife, as he would a goose or a calf."

"Merciful Heaven, that is terrible!" exclaimed Champagny, turning pale. "The life of your majesty was really endangered, then?"

"If the knife which an assassin aims at your breast endangers your life, mine was endangered," said the emperor, with a gloomy smile. "It seems my marshals were somewhat distrustful, and did not believe so confidently in the love and admiration of the spectators as I did, and that saved my life."

"It is, perhaps, only a false suspicion, sire; the knife, it may be, was not intended for your majesty."

"Oh, it was! I personally examined the young man. He confesses his purpose; he boasts of it, and says if I pardoned him he would attempt the same thing."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Champagny.

"Yes, horrible!" repeated the emperor, musingly, "the more so as he assures me with the utmost tranquillity that every German shares his hatred of me; that the whole land is but a hotbed of conspiracy, and that thousands of hands are already armed to pierce my heart. And this young man is in perfect health, bodily and mentally, according to Corvisart, who twice examined him; his pulse is regular, and not in the least feverish. Ah, these Germans have gall in their veins instead of blood! They are fanatics, and of such we ought to beware." He dropped his head on his breast. After some time he turned toward the minister, who was sitting opposite him in respectful silence. "Champagny," he said, hastily, "we must make peace. I am bent on putting an end to the war, and on leaving the country. Return to Vienna, and send immediately for the Austrian plenipotentiaries. You have already agreed as to the chief points; it is the war contribution alone that still prevents both sides from coming to a definite understanding. You ask for fifty millions more than the Austrians offer to pay; well, compromise with them; induce the ambassadors to assent to the payment of seventy-five millions, and make peace. I am satisfied with the stipulations of the last draft of the treaty; add to it whatever you may deem prudent. I rely altogether on you; but, at all events, make peace! Hasten to Vienna. Good-by."

The Duke de Cadore left the emperor's cabinet. Napoleon was still moodily sitting in his easy-chair, when he murmured: "Ah, these Germans! They cannot be trusted! They are dangerous fanatics, capable of perpetrating the foulest and most cowardly crime, and of sanctifying it on the altar of duty."

CHAPTER LII.

AN EXECUTION.

NAPOLEON had passed a sleepless night. The image of this pale youth, with his determined patriotism, who frankly confessed that his object had been assassination, and regretted that the attempt was unsuccessful, stood as a grim sentinel by the emperor's couch, forbidding sleep to his eyes or peace to his mind.

It was scarcely dawn when he rose, sad and weary, and called his *valet de chambre* to dress him. His lips scarcely touching the cup of chocolate presented to him, he pushed it impatiently aside. Contrary to his usual manner with the servants, he left his bedroom without a pleasant glance or a kind word, and repaired to his cabinet. The candelabras on the mantel-piece were lit, for it was still dark; and a bright fire was burning, but the room was not yet warm.

"Germany is a cold, disagreeable country," exclaimed Napoleon, shuddering, and warming his feet at the fire. "We are only in the early part of October, but it is already like mid-winter. The sun himself seems to put on the sheep-skin which every German pulls over his ears. In truth, it is a wretched country; I wish I could turn my back on it to-morrow, and abid adieu to these wild dreamers. When so slow and cold-blooded a nation gets excited, it resembles a bull in the arena, whose fury is kindled by a red handkerchief. Such is Germany at this time, and I must step out of the way if I do not wish to be pierced or trampled to death. That would be inglorious!"

A low rapping at the door was heard. The emperor started. "Come in!" he shouted, in an imperious voice.

The door opened immediately, and Constant ap-

peared. "Pardon me, sire, but it is so early that none of the chamberlains are yet in the anteroom."

"Well, what is it?" asked Napoleon, impatiently. "Quick, what is the matter?"

"Sire, the Duke de Cadore has just arrived from Vienna and desires to be admitted."

"Show him in immediately," ordered the emperor, who, in his impatience, hurried to the door to receive the minister.

Champagny entered, carrying under his arm a large portfolio.

"Well, Champagny, what brings you hither at so early an hour? What has occurred? What did you do last night?"

"Sire," said Champagny, composedly, "I have made peace."

"What? Peace!" exclaimed Napoleon, and his countenance brightened, as if the morning had suddenly cast on him its earliest golden beams. "Peace! And the treaty has already been signed?"

"Yes, sire, and I bring it to your majesty."

"Signed! But how did you do that?"

"Sire, as soon as I reached Vienna last night, I sent for the Prince von Lichtenstein and Count Bubna, and locked myself with them in my room. We had a long and exciting discussion; but I saw that the plenipotentiaries had received fresh instructions from their emperor, and that he had ordered them to make peace. I extorted million by million from them; at one o'clock in the morning I had already made them consent to the payment of seventy-five millions, the sum demanded by your majesty; but I saw that I could go farther, and I did. At two o'clock I succeeded in a war contribution of eighty-five millions, and with that I was satisfied."

"What!" exclaimed the emperor, gayly; "you have obtained eighty-five millions when I told you I would be content with seventy-five millions! That was well done, Champagny, and I am highly pleased with your conduct. Give me the treaty. I wish to read it."

Champagny handed the emperor the papers, and he read them attentively. "Very well," he said, when he had finished, and with a smile—"we have accomplished, indeed, a very favorable peace. Austria has concluded four treaties with me within the last twelve years, but I must confess that this is the most advantageous to us—more so than the treaties of Campo Formio, Luneville, and Presburg. Austria loses two thousand square leagues, with three millions and a half of inhabitants, and pays us a war contribution of eighty-five millions of francs. I think France may be thankful, for, from this campaign, we bring her territory, money, and glory. We have done with Austria; and the insurgents of the Tyrol, headed by their peasant-prince, Andrew Hofer, will likewise have to submit. Their own emperor will command the insurgents to lay down their arms. But I will make an example, and show the world how such people ought to be chastised. Andrew Hofer must be delivered to me; he must be punished as a demagogue! Come, Champagny, let us lose no time. I will sign the treaty. It is very good. I am content with it." He stepped to his desk and hastily affixed his signature. He then cast the pen aside, and his features assumed an expression of proud scorn. "Henceforth Austria is nothing but a vassal of France, and I can annihilate her whenever I please. Her frontiers are open and unprotected on all sides; she is weakened within and without, and hemmed in everywhere by French territories. She dares no longer breathe freely, or raise her arm against us. If, however, she should, we shall crush her, and reconstruct the throne of Charlemagne on the ruins of Austria. His crown belongs to me already; I have it at Aix-la-Chapelle, and I do not see what should prevent me from placing it on my brow in Vienna."

"Sire," said Champagny, smilingly, "it would, perhaps, be more desirable for your majesty to allow the throne of the Hapsburgs to exist, and to render Austria harmless, not by destroying her, but by attaching the imperial family to your majesty by intimate and sacred ties. A vanquished enemy is always dangerous; but an ally, even though weak, will strengthen your own power, and Austria is able to give to the throne of your majesty the last and only jewel that, to the infinite regret of your subjects, it still lacks."

"Ah!" exclaimed the emperor. "You do not mean to say that Austria, bleeding from a thousand wounds that I have inflicted upon her, could make up her mind to put an end to her hatred by concluding an alliance of love with me?"

"Sire," said Champagny, "I do not believe that your majesty is hated by all the members of the imperial family of the Hapsburgs."

"What do you mean?" asked Napoleon, casting a quick glance on the smiling countenance of the minister.

"I suppose your majesty still remembers that, during the bombardment of Vienna last May, a flag of truce was sent with the request that no more bombshells be fired at the palace, because one of the archduchesses had remained there, having been prevented by sickness from leaving the capital with the imperial family?"

"I remember the incident," said Napoleon. "A few shells had already struck the palace, and I gave orders that it should be spared. One of the little daughters of the emperor, the Archduchess Maria Louisa, then a mere child, had been left there with her nurse."

"Sire, this child is seventeen years old, and, as everybody assures me, she is very beautiful, with light hair, blue eyes, and charming figure. She was deeply moved at the generosity manifested by your majesty; she is filled with admiration for the hero to whom indeed the whole world is doing homage, and before whose power the mightiest princes pass away: she is possessed of sufficient energy and courage to give utterance to her sentiments, even in presence of her father the emperor."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Napoleon, joyfully. "But who told you so, Champagny?"

"Sire, the Prince von Lichtenstein, during our confidential interview yesterday; and he added that the Emperor Francis, notwithstanding the short time that has elapsed since the conclusion of the recent bloody war, and the many fresh humiliations he has had to undergo, seemed himself to be an admirer of your majesty, for he listened to the eulogy of the archduchess with smiling tranquillity."

"That is strange," said Napoleon, slowly pacing the room; "but the Austrian marriages were always pernicious to France."

"Sire, it was, however, an Austrian princess, Queen Anne, who gave to France one of her greatest kings, Louis XIV."

"That is true," said Napoleon; "and I should be happy if my son resembled the great Louis."

"Sire, he will resemble his great father," said Champagny.

"A son—an heir to my throne," said the emperor, passionately—"a legitimate inheritor of my glory, and a descendant of an ancient and imperial house, who would dare doubt the purity of his blood, and his right to reign? His throne I would have established; and he would confirm by the highest title the fourth dynasty of France. Champagny, I must have such a son, and—poor Josephine!"

He paced the apartment with rapid steps, and, halting in front of his minister, he said: "I shall set out to-morrow; this air is oppressive. I can hardly breathe it; and besides I have no longer any business here. You will remain for the purpose of exchanging the treaties of peace. Immediately after the arrival of the Austrian plenipotentiary, bringing the copy of the treaty signed by the Emperor Francis, you will attend to the exchange of the ratifications, and inform me that it has been carried into effect. I shall go from here to Munich, and reach Fontainebleau in the course of a week. You may tell the Prince von Lichtenstein, in the same confidential manner in which he spoke to you of the archduchess, that I am now firmly determined to separate from the Empress Josephine; that a divorce from her had been irrevocably resolved upon, and that it would be publicly proclaimed in the course of the present year. That is all that you will tell him for the present. Champagny, I am determined to make this sacrifice for the sake of France, however painful it may be to my heart. The welfare of my country and the stability of my throne render it incumbent. After the divorce has taken place, I shall demand a final and categorical reply from Russia, and if Alexander is unable to give it—if his mother still refuse to place her daughter on the most powerful throne in the world—well, then, I shall break off the negotiations, and remember that the Archduchess Maria Louisa has some respect and sympathy for me. For the present we may be content with Austria, and I think the treaty of Vienna is a work of which we may well be proud. The genius of France will give it a glorious place on the tablets of history!"

Two days afterward the emperor's travelling-carriage was in front of the palace gate of Schönbrunn. Every thing was in readiness for his departure, and he was about to leave his cabinet. He only wished to see Grand-Marshal Duroc, who had just arrived from Vienna.

The door opened, and Duroc entered. Napoleon quickly met him. "Well, Duroc," he asked, "did you see him? Did he name his companions in this crime?"

"Sire, I have, and conversed with him," said Duroc, gravely. "He refuses to confess any thing, and talks like a madman."

"What does he say?" exclaimed Napoleon. "Conceal nothing from me. This young man interests me. I desire to know all."

"Sire, he affirms that your majesty is his only accomplice; the misery brought by you on Germany, he contends, instigated him to attempt the deed, and you ought to blame none but yourself."

"He does not repent, then? He does not ask for mercy?"

"He regrets only that he did not succeed, and he asks merely the favor of being permitted to keep the portrait of his Anna, which he contemplates continually; and he implores her in touching words to forgive him the grief he has brought upon her."

"What a strange mixture of ferocity and gentleness!" said the emperor, thoughtfully. "Has he been closely watched during these two days?"

"Two gendarmes were locked up with him all the time, and they speak with astonishment of the unruffled tranquillity of the young man. For the most part he paces the cell with slow steps; at times he kneels known and prays in silence. Not a word of despair has escaped his lips, not a tear dropped from his eyes. Yesterday, when his dinner was brought, he took the knife and looked at it musingly. One of the gendarmes intended to take it from him, but Staps handed it at once, and said, smilingly, 'Fear nothing, I will not hurt myself with it; I will not waste my blood; it is reserved for the altar of my country, and must be shed by my enemies.'"

"Did he take any food?" asked the emperor.

"No, sire, he has not eaten or drunk any thing these two days. He says he has done with life, and will have strength enough left to meet his death with a firm step."

"He knows, then, that he is to be shot?"

"Yes, sire, he knows that the court-martial passed sentence of death upon him last night."

"But I hope you told him, Duroc, that I had sent you to him, and that I wished to pardon him, as soon as he repents of his deeds, implores my forgiveness, and takes an oath to give up his evil designs? Did you tell him all that, Duroc?"

"I did, sire."

"And what did he reply? Tell me every thing!"

"Sire, he replied, that if he could repent of the deed, he would not have attempted it; that if he accepted pardon, all Germany would curse him, while he now descends into the grave, accompanied by the blessings and tears of his country; in fine, that his death will arouse the Germans, and urge them to renewed efforts for liberty."

The emperor made no reply. His whole frame shuddered, and if Corvisart had felt his pulse then, he would not have said that it was quite regular. The large drops of perspiration on the emperor's brow might have alarmed the physician.

"I am sure he is insane," said Napoleon, after a pause. "I want him to be looked upon as a lunatic. I hope that the whole affair will remain a secret, and that the world will hear nothing of it; but if it should be talked about, we must insist that the man was insane."

Duroc bowed in silence.

"When is Staps to be shot?" asked the emperor, after a pause.

"Sire, this morning, at seven o'clock."

Napoleon glanced at the clock. "It is half-past six, he said; "I will set out. Well, the Viennese will not hear the report of the muskets, for the cannon that is to announce to them the conclusion of peace will render inaudible the volley at the execution. Come, Duroc! I am tired of this fantastic Germany! Let us return to France!"

Quickly crossing the room and approaching the door, he stood on the threshold and glanced again at the clock. "It is a quarter to seven," he said; "in fifteen minutes there will be one lunatic less in Germany!" A few minutes afterward a carriage rolled down the avenue of the palace of Schönbrunn. The emperor had departed.

At the same time the room opened in which Staps had been confined for three days, under the close surveillance of two gendarmes. An officer entered; eight soldiers, shouldering their muskets, drew up in front of the door. Frederick Staps met the officer with a serene smile. He still wore the short black velvet coat, fastened around his slender waist by a broad leather belt, his neck surrounded by a white collar, on which his long hair fell in dense masses. During the three days of his captivity he had not undressed, taken no food, and even abstained from sleep. His time was occupied in preparing for death, and in writing letters to his beloved Anna and his old father. These letters, folded and carefully directed, he placed in the belt which the fatal knife had adorned three days before.

"Sir," said Staps, offering his hand to the officer, "I suppose you come for me?"

"It will soon be seven o'clock," replied the officer, in a sad, compassionate tone.

"Oh, sir," exclaimed Staps, "do not pity me! I shall die joyfully. But I have a favor to ask of you. I should like to send my last love-greetings to my father, and the young lady to whom I was engaged. Will you be kind enough to send my letters to them? You hesitate? Reply to me, and consider that a dying man always should be told the truth."

"Well, sir," replied the officer, "I am not permitted to forward these letters to them. Not a word is to be said about your fate; it must remain a secret."

"Ah, the tyrant is afraid lest my destiny should become generally known. He wishes to hide it in obscurity; but my name, and that for which I die, will not sink into oblivion. The day of freedom will dawn yet on my native land, and my grave will be known and visited by my German brethren. You will not forward my letters?"

"I am not allowed to do so, sir."

"Well, then I will forward them myself," exclaimed Staps, drawing the letters from his belt and tearing them into small pieces, which he threw away. "Go! my greetings and adieus!" he said; "let the winds bear ye into the quiet parsonage of my old father, and the chamber of my faithful Anna! Tell my countrymen of poor Frederick Staps, who wished to save Germany, and could only die for it!—Now come, sir, let us go!"

"You have no other wish?" asked the officer. "There is nothing that you desire, and that I could grant you?"

"Yes, sir, there is. I do not wish to be tied like a wild beast, but conducted to the place of execution with my arms free; I do not wish to be blindfolded. I would like to see the soil and the sky of my country in the last moment!"

"That wish will be granted. You shall be executed with your eyes open, and your arms unfettered."

"Thank you," said Staps, cordially grasping the officer's hand. "I suppose it is time for us to go?"

"Yes," said the officer, mournfully, "we must go!"

"I am ready," responded Staps, and he walked with firm steps toward the door.

The soldiers stepped aside, and then surrounded him and the officer. The procession moved slowly and silently through the long and gloomy corridors. Emerging into the open air, they came to a square inside the bastions. High ramparts surrounded it on three sides; on the fourth rose the rear wall of the barracks in which the condemned had spent the three days of his imprisonment. A few French soldiers were standing here and there at the open windows, gazing with indifferent faces on the young stranger led to execution, and of whose crime they knew nothing. He was conducted across the square to the opposite rampart, and placed in front of the newly-dug grave which was to receive his body.

A detachment of French soldiers marched from the gate of the barracks and formed in line, just as the sun cast his first rays over the rampart, and shone upon the head of the pale youth. At this moment the earth seemed to tremble as beneath a peal of thunder.

"What is that?" asked Staps of the officer who was standing by his side.

"It is the salute announcing that peace has been concluded."

"Peace!" exclaimed the dying youth, joyfully. "Oh, tell me the truth, sir, do not deceive me? Has peace really been concluded?"

"Yes, a treaty has been signed. The Emperor Napoleon leaves Schönbrunn this very day to return to France. Three months hence there will not be a single French soldier to be seen in all Austria."

"Peace restored to Germany!" cried Staps, and, sinking on his knees, he raised his arms toward heaven; joy beamed from his countenance, and his eyes filled with tears. "I thank Thee, my God, I thank Thee!" he exclaimed aloud. "Thou allowest me to depart amid the booming of cannon proclaiming peace to Germany! I die happy!"

"Attention! Aim!" ordered the officer.

The young man rose from his knees. "Give me another minute," he cried; "let me sing my death-hymn!"

The officer nodded assent. Staps, stretching his arms upward, sang in a joyous voice:

"Tod du süsser für das Vaterland,
Süsser als der Brautgruss, als das Lallen
Auf dem Mutterschooss des ersten Kindes,
Sei mir willkommen!
Was das Lied nicht löset, löst—"

"Fire!" said the commanding officer, and twelve soldiers discharged their muskets.

Frederick Staps immediately fell dead, and the blood streaming from his breast reddened his native soil. While Napoleon's cannon was proclaiming the conclusion of peace, this youthful martyr breathed his last sigh!

BOOK VII.

CHAPTER LIII.

HOMEWARD BOUND.

The 15th of December, 1809, was dawning. Queen Louisa had long looked for this day with a throbbing heart, and now that it had come, she felt embarrassed and anxious. It was the day when the royal family were to leave Königsberg and return to Berlin, where the court was again to reside. Since the 3d of October the French troops and authorities had left the capital, and Berlin was once more a Prussian city, yearning for the return of its king and queen.

The carriages were at the door; the princesses, wrapped in fur robes, were in the anteroom and awaited the queen, whose toilet had long since been finished. But Louisa had not yet left her sitting-room. The king made his appearance, ready to set out, and was somewhat surprised at not finding her with her daughters.

"The queen does not know, perhaps, that the carriages are at the door," said the king. "I will inform her that it is time for us to start." He walked rapidly through the adjoining rooms and noiselessly opened the door of the queen's sitting-room.

Louisa, wrapped in her travelling-robe, sat on the sofa, her hands folded, her face bathed in tears, and her eyes uplifted with an imploring expression. She did not immediately notice the king, who, as if in profound reverence, stood at the door. The queen was praying—how could he dare to disturb her!

At last she lowered her eyes, and suddenly saw that her husband was present. "Oh, my friend," she exclaimed, rising hastily, "my thoughts were with you, and on taking leave of these rooms where, owing to your love, I have enjoyed, these last years, so much calm and sacred happiness, I prayed that God cause it to accompany us to our future residence."

"But while praying you wept, Louisa?" asked the king. "I hoped that the days of tears were past, and that my Louisa would become again as merry and light-hearted as she used to be. Do you not like to return to Berlin?"

The queen looked down musingly. "I cannot tell you," she said, thoughtfully. "When I think that I shall soon be in Berlin, and meet again the faithful people, my heart is joyful, and then again I shed many tears when I consider that, while I may find every thing there as formerly, there may in reality be sad changes, and I do not know how I may be affected. Dismal forebodings are troubling me; I should like best to sit always alone, behind my little lamp, and indulge in my reflections. I am longing for Berlin, and yet I am almost afraid to go there."

"What are you afraid of?" asked the king, pressing his wife tenderly against his breast.

"I believe I am afraid of prosperity," she said, with a gentle smile. "I had become entirely resigned, and forever bidden farewell to outward splendor, so that its return surprises and almost alarms me. Oh, my beloved friend, will it not destroy the humble, inward repose, which, during the time of privation, was our support, and the only source of our happiness?"

"It is true," said the king, smiling, "during these quiet years here at Königsberg, I was so happy as to have my wife, the charming consoler of my afflictions, always at my side; henceforth, the queen will often take my wife from me, and thousands of hearts which will welcome you so rapturously, will separate me often enough from my ideal. But I am not jealous, and the more my beautiful queen is honored, the greater will be my happiness. Come, my Louisa, let us go! the carriages are in readiness, and the children are waiting for us; but, before we leave this quiet

room, accept again my thanks for the fidelity and kindness you have manifested toward me during my misfortunes. I am indebted to you for many alleviations of the sorrows which weighed me down. I am not a man of many words and cannot make fine phrases, but here in my soul I feel fervently that God has placed you at my side as an angel of consolation for the days of adversity, and of happiness for those of prosperity. Because I love you, I gave your name to our youngest daughter, born here at Königsberg. May she become a Louisa!"

"And may our sons inherit the noble spirit and the faithful and devout heart of their father!" exclaimed the queen, deeply moved. "May they bear adversity like him, without despondency, and enjoy prosperity without haughtiness! Oh, my friend, why will we say, then, that we are returning to Berlin poorer and less powerful than when we left the city three years ago? No, we return richer and more powerful: for we left with five children, and we return with seven—seven hearts that love us, and belong to us. Do they not constitute wealth and power? Come, my husband, let us hasten to our children! and with what a mother's pride shall I show our treasures to the good people of Berlin!" She smiled and drew the king along; her eyes, from which the tears had long since disappeared, were now radiant with love and joy—not a shade of melancholy was to be seen in her countenance when she embraced her children.

The journey to Berlin could be performed but slowly and in short stages. The snow-clad roads were almost impassable. Besides, every city and village through which the royal family journeyed, would have its share of congratulation. They were greeted with triumphal arches, and hymns and addresses of welcome. No one had escaped the miseries of war; mourning mothers and wives, amid the ruins of a former prosperity, were everywhere to be seen; but all this was forgotten during those happy hours when the people, delivered at length from foreign oppression, rejoiced again in the presence of the sovereigns who had endured the same afflictions. The whole journey resembled a triumphal procession—everywhere enthusiastic receptions and love-offerings!

On the eighth day at noon they arrived at the village of Weissensee, a league from Berlin. The shouts of thousands of happy people received them. The whole population had gathered at the roadside in order to greet the returning king and his family, and at the entrance of the village were halting fifty young citizens of Berlin mounted on fine horses. They had been commissioned by the inhabitants of the capital to escort the carriage in which Louisa was to make her entry, and which the citizens desired to present to her. It was a splendid gift, richly decorated with silver, and lined with violet velvet, the favorite color of the queen. The eight magnificent horses attached to the carriage wore violet harness, adorned with silver rings and buckles. The queen entered it with her daughter Charlotte and her third son, Prince Charles; the king and the two oldest princes mounted on horseback.

"Now, Louisa," said the king, riding up, "we have nearly reached our destination. There are the spires of Berlin; in half an hour we shall be there. But how pale you are, and your lips quiver! Are you unwell? Are you suffering?"

"No," she said; "I live only in my heart, which is throbbing as though it were ready to burst. Oh, I believe that one may die of joy. But such a death must be very happy!"

"But you shall live in joy," said the king, smiling. "Farewell now, Louisa; I must leave you. According to the ceremonial, I must be with the princes at the head of the procession. *Au revoir* at our house in Berlin!"

"*Au revoir*," said the queen, leaning back on the cushions of the carriage. "Charlotte," she said to the princess sitting at her side, "when we are near the gate, tell me. I want to be surprised, and, until I have reached the dear city, I will look at the sky, and remember that it is the same sky that was over us at Memel in the days of our deepest affliction." She threw back her head. Her eyes, blue and pure as heaven itself, were looking up, and the bright firmament seemed to inspire her with devout and grateful thoughts. Prayers were in her heart, and the memories of other days mingled with her prayers. It was exactly sixteen years since she made her entry into Berlin as a happy young bride. At that time, life was as the flowery spring, and she saw before her in her hopeful dreams only a world of happiness, love, and glory. She was then a bride, beautiful, loving, and beloved by her young husband, the inheritor of a kingdom. Now, at her second entry, she was sixteen years older, a matron of thirty-four, and a mother of seven children. The storms of life had passed over her, destroying many of her hopes. Her heart had been shaken as well as the throne of her husband. The ills of common mortals had befallen the king and his consort, and it was not their innate dignity and majesty that had enabled them to bear up, but their warm human feeling; it was not their self-reliance that had consoled them, but the faith that God, the Father of all, would be merciful to

them, if, conscious of their impotence, they recognized His providence and believed in His wisdom and goodness.

The queen thought of all this, and compared the entry of the bride, rejoicing in the dreams of her young love and in the reality of worldly power, with the entry of the mother and queen, disappointed in her hopes and robbed of her dominion.

"And yet it is better to-day," she murmured, "I am richer now than I was then. My heart is richer, my soul is stronger, I—"

"Mamma," exclaimed the Princess Charlotte, "I see already the Bernauer gate! Oh, hear the shouts, look at that triumphal arch!"

The queen turned her eyes toward the city. The cheers of the people sounded in her ears like the early greetings of her happiness, and filled her soul with ecstasy. As the king, between his sons, rode into the gateway, the bells rang, and the cannon shook the ground. When the queen's carriage entered, the soldiers formed in line on both sides of the street, and behind them surged a dense crowd of men and women. Nothing was to be seen but happy, smiling faces; love was beaming from every eye, and with bells, cannon, waving hands, and the cheers of her citizens, Berlin greeted the return of her sovereigns.

The king acknowledged these demonstrations with a grave, thoughtful face; he saluted the people affectionately, but his countenance grew sad. He thought of the many faithful subjects whom he had lost, of the cities and provinces which had been taken from him, of the grievous and bloody sacrifices of the last years; he remembered that he was returning to his ancestors, possessed only of the smaller portion of the inheritance which they had left him, and these reflections overshadowed his joy.

The queen only felt and thought of the happiness of her return. These thousands of hearts throbbing for her, this crowd of greeting men about her carriage to see her and shout words of welcome, filled her soul with profound emotion. She did not restrain her tears, and was not ashamed of this expression of her feelings. She wept, smiled, and rejoiced with her people.

When the cheers reëchoed through the street as she passed, the queen exclaimed aloud: "What grateful music this is! It sounds in my ears as sacred, and the city seems a vast cathedral! Charlotte, my beloved daughter, listen! but with a devout heart. There is hardly any thing more solemn and yet delightful to a princess than the cheers of her subjects. She who deserves them must return the people's love, and sympathize in their joys and sufferings. My daughter, if you yourself should one day wear a crown, think of this hour, and let the affection of the people now occupy your heart.—But, my child, there is our house, the dear old house where you children were born! What persons are standing in front of it? Who are they waving their handkerchiefs toward us? The beloved sisters of your father, the Princesses of Orange and Hesse! Who is that tall gentleman at their side? It is my father, my honored father!" The carriage drove up to the portal of the royal palace. "Welcome!" cried the princesses. "Welcome!" shouted the crowd, filling the large square in front.

The queen did not utter a word; but, stretching out her arms toward her father, she greeted him with a smile, while the tears rolled over her cheeks.

The duke pushed the footmen aside and opened himself the door of her carriage, when the queen, disregarding all etiquette, threw her arms round his neck, and kissed him. The people who witnessed this touching scene, became silent. With folded hands and tearful eyes they admired her who had ever been an affectionate and grateful daughter as well as a beneficent sovereign, and their prayers ascended to heaven for her welfare. Half carried in the arms of her father, Louisa entered the palace, and ascended the staircase. The doors of the large reception-room were open. The king met her; her two oldest sons stood behind him, and her two youngest children, held up by their nurses, stretched out their little arms toward her. She joyfully hastened into the room. "Come, my children," she exclaimed with a smile, "come, my seven radiant stars!"

She took the two youngest children, Albert, not yet three years, and Louisa, one year old, in her arms; the five other children walking by her side, and thus, in the midst of these "seven stars," she approached her father. Bending her knee before him, she exclaimed: "Grandfather! here are your grandchildren; here is your daughter, who, with her children, asks for your blessing, and here is the most faithful and beloved man, my husband! Oh, father, honor him, for he has preserved to your daughter her happiness!" She placed the two youngest ones at the feet of the duke, and took the king's hand, which she pressed to her bosom.

The king, who was afraid lest this excitement should become injurious to the feeble health of his wife, after saluting the duke and his own sisters in a cordial manner, proposed an inspection of the rooms of their so long deserted house.

"Yes!" exclaimed Louisa, "let us show my beloved father the temple of our happiness; and

the good spirits around us no doubt welcome him and us. Come!" Walking between her father and her husband, and followed by the princesses and her oldest sons, the queen hastened through the suite of rooms, hallowed by the remembrances of other days, and which now seemed to her as beautiful as the halls of a fairy-palace. "How tasteful, how brilliant!" exclaimed Louisa. "Formerly, the magnificence of these rooms did not strike me at all; but now I am able to perceive and appreciate it. Our houses at Memel and Königsberg were much plainer, and I thought of the beauty of our residence at Berlin.—Ah, and there is my piano! Oh, how often have I longed for it! Will you grant me a favor, my king and husband?"

"The queen is in her own rooms; she has to ask no favors here, but only to command," said the king.

"You will then permit me to salute the good spirits of our house with music, and to sing a hymn of welcome to them?" asked the queen.

The king smilingly nodded, and Louisa, hastening to the piano, quickly took off her gloves, and sat down on a chair in front of the instrument. Her fingers swept over the keys in many brilliant cadences. Her face was cheerful, but gradually she became grave, and, turning her large eyes toward heaven, her concords were slow and solemn. She thought of the past—of the day when, seized with forebodings, she sang here a hymn which she repeated at the peasant's cottage during her flight to Königsberg, when her presentiments were fulfilled. Her hands played almost spontaneously that simple and beautiful air, and again she sang with emotion:

"Who never ate his bread with tears,
Who never in the sorrowing hours
Of night, lay sunk in gloomy fears,
He knows you not, ye Heavenly Powers!" *

CHAPTER LIV.

THE EMPEROR FRANCIS AND METTERNICH.

THE Emperor Francis was pacing his cabinet in evident uneasiness and excitement. Count Clement Metternich, since Stadion's withdrawal from the cabinet, prime minister and confidential adviser, was standing at the emperor's desk, and whenever Francis, in walking up and down, turned his back to him, a scornful smile overspread his handsome countenance; this manifestation of contempt disappeared, however, as soon as his master turned again toward him.

"It will stir up a great deal of ill-feeling throughout Germany," said the Emperor Francis, hastily. "No one will believe that I, who was hitherto the most implacable enemy of Bonaparte, should have suddenly done him so much honor."

"But at last every one will have to believe it, your majesty," said Metternich, in his gentle, melodious voice. "The facts will refute the surmises of the incredulous."

"But it is outrageous," cried the emperor, "and I can hardly think it possible that I am to assist Bonaparte in making a decent match, and that I am to stoop so low as to call the son of the Corsican lawyer my son-in-law! Let me tell you, it will never do; I should ever after be afraid of passing the church of the Capuchins; I should always imagine that the tombs of my ancestors opened, and their ghosts arose and asked me, 'How could you permit the imperial blood of the Hapsburgs to mingle with that of the little Corsican lawyer's son, the insurgent and revolutionary captain, who chances to be a successful warrior?' Yes, and I ask myself the question, How can I permit an archduchess, my daughter, to be married to a man seated on a throne which does not belong to him, and which the Bourbons, the legitimate rulers of France, will one day take from him? How can I permit it, I ask, and how am I to bear it, if this fellow without a pedigree should some day take the liberty to call me his dear father-in-law? How is it possible for me to expose myself to such risk?"

"Will your majesty permit me to answer these just questions of your imperial conscience?" asked Metternich.

"Do so," exclaimed Francis. "Explain the whole matter to me as though I were not the emperor, but a common citizen offended at the idea that the Emperor of Austria should permit his daughter to be married to the revolutionary leader who has the impudence to assume the imperial title. What would you say? How would you excuse me?"

Metternich advanced a step toward the emperor, and replied: "I would say the Emperor Francis has acted as a wise statesman and ruler, and as a father of his people. In order to preserve Austria from new wars, he has sacrificed his most precious treasure, his only child. It is a pledge securing peace to his exhausted people. Austria is not now able to resist Napoleon in case he should again attack her. Our fron-

* "Wer nie sein Brot mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt Euch nicht, Ihr himmlischen Mächte!"

tiers are defenceless; our finances are exhausted. Hitherto every war has caused us grievous losses in money, men, and territory; and so long as we stand alone, so long as Russia persists in her absurd policy of being the cat's-paw of France, it would be senseless and criminal again to endanger the existence of the monarchy. We have suffered such immense losses, that we must have peace to recover what we have lost. Hence we must be reconciled with France, and this reconciliation strengthens us against Russia. The very fact that Napoleon desires to conclude an alliance with Austria indicates a change in his political system, by which we should try to profit, and if (what is unavoidable) a rupture with Russia ensues, Austria ought to derive as much benefit therefrom as possible, and enlarge her territories. We ought to render our present position toward France as profitable as possible. The archduchess will be a precious guaranty to Napoleon, for he will feel convinced that the emperor will be unwilling to sacrifice his child, and this conviction will fill him with confidence and a feeling of security. Austria becomes closely connected with the political interests of Napoleon, and shares the hatred which all Europe feels against the Emperor of the French. But this very hatred incurred by Austria will be regarded by Napoleon as another surety for his fidelity. He will ally himself more closely with us, and become more hostile to Russia, the natural enemy of Austria; hence it is better for us to fight in company with France against Russia than to allow Russia and France to fight against us. Moreover, our finances are in such a deplorable condition, that a bankruptcy of the state would be the inevitable consequence of another war; not only the future of the emperor's dynasty, but the fortunes of his subjects would be endangered. In consideration of this, the emperor, in his wisdom, has preferred to secure peace, the source of prosperity, to his beloved subjects, and, like the patriarch, he sacrifices his own child willingly and joyously. The noble emperor ought to be blessed and praised for this, and his wisdom, which despises prejudice, and only weighs and respects the benefits to be secured by such a measure, should be gratefully acknowledged. That, sire," said Metternich, concluding his speech, "is what I would reply to him who would dare in my presence censure the marriage of the archduchess to the Emperor Napoleon."

"It sounds well enough," said the emperor, thoughtfully, "but it is still an unpalatable dish for me, and my tongue will cling to the roof of my mouth when I am to say, 'My son-in-law the Emperor Napoleon!' He is no real emperor, although he has placed three crowns on his head, and even had the impudence of dividing my order of the Golden Fleece, contrary to law, into three classes; he can never become a real emperor; he must always remain the son of a Corsican lawyer."

"Whom the pope, however, has anointed and crowned emperor," said Metternich, with a sneer.

"Yes, and, in return, this ungrateful fellow has deprived the holy father of his throne, and imprisoned him! In short, I detest the usurper. It always deeply pained me to hear of Bonaparte and his new victories; and since I saw him on that day after the battle of Austerlitz, he is more hateful to me than ever. Oh, how superciliously this fellow then looked at me! He talked to me so haughtily that I felt quite miserable, and did not know what to say. I shall never forgive M. Bonaparte, and yet I am to allow him to become my son-in-law! I tell you, Metternich, it will not do, for the end will be bad."

"But the commencement," said Metternich, smiling, "will be good for Austria, and that is the chief point. We shall take care that the end will not be bad for us either, and that Austria will not be the loser by it."

"It is all right," said Francis, nodding, "but the mischief is, that when the unhappy time comes, M. Bonaparte will be my son-in-law, and that it may be necessary for me to support him and his cause."

"Your majesty," said Metternich, in a low voice, and glancing cautiously over the room, "if you do not now hesitate to sacrifice your own child for the welfare of your country, at a later time you will not shrink from sacrificing your son-in-law. There are no relatives in politics; Austria has no sisters and brothers, no daughters and sons-in-law; that is what the august uncle of your majesty, the Emperor Joseph, often said, and he was right."

"Yes, indeed, my great uncle Joseph was right," exclaimed the emperor, laughing; "there are no sons-in-law in politics! Oh, it would do my heart good if I could revenge myself one day on M. Bonaparte for all the humiliations that I have to bear now."

"Your majesty," said Metternich, in a lower voice than before, "there is an excellent Italian proverb, 'Revenge must be eaten cold.' Your majesty knows it?"

"Of course I do," whispered the emperor. "I know it, and shall surely remember it. 'Revenge must be eaten cold;' he who wants to eat it hot, will burn his tongue. Let us wait, therefore."

"Yes, let us wait," whispered Metternich. He then added in a loud voice: "Your majesty, then, will graciously accept the proposals of the Emperor Napoleon as to his union with the archduchess, order the marriage contracts to be made out, and permit the Prince de Neufchatel, Marshal Berthier, to apply to your majesty and the archduchess for the hand of the imperial princess?"

"Yes, I will," said Francis, hesitatingly, "but let me tell you, I am afraid of what the empress, my consort, will say about the matter, and also of Maria Louisa herself. The empress never liked Bonaparte, and I do not know how I shall break the news to her, that the man for whose sake, but a few months since, so much Austrian blood was shed, and to whom I had to sacrifice the brave Tyrolese, Andrew Hofer, is to become my son-in-law. And Maria Louisa will be greatly surprised; I am afraid she will weep a good deal on hearing the news."

"I believe the archduchess will cheerfully submit to her fate," said Metternich. "I heard her imperial highness speak in terms of intense admiration of the heroism and marvellous deeds of the Emperor Napoleon."

"Yes, she did," replied Francis, "but I commanded her not to give expression to such sentiments. I explained to her how much misery and ignominy Bonaparte had brought upon Austria and our house, and what a cruel, tyrannical, and bloodthirsty man he is; and my words made so deep an impression on the mind of my dutiful daughter, that she has detested Bonaparte ever since, and is afraid of him, as though he were a monster."

"Perhaps, if your majesty were to tell the archduchess that the Emperor Napoleon is not so bad after all," said Metternich, smiling—"if you were to assure her imperial highness that he is a very great and admirable man, and that his laurels are as good as a long line of ancestors, the words of your majesty would not fail to impress themselves on her mind, and her hatred would disappear, particularly if you should show her a correct likeness of the emperor, for care has been hitherto taken to exhibit to the imperial princes and princesses only those representations of Napoleon in which he is horribly caricatured. I know that the mistress of ceremonies of the archduchess, Countess Colloredo, in her passionate hatred against him, and against France generally, tried this remedy to cure the imperial princess of her admiration for the conqueror, and the archduchess sees, hears, and reads nothing but what has been previously examined by the countess. I repeat, that if your majesty could have a really correct likeness of Napoleon brought to the young lady's notice, her ideas of him would be somewhat changed."

"But I have no good likeness of Bonaparte," said the emperor, somewhat embarrassed.

"Marshal Berthier brought one, which he is to present to the archduchess on solemnly applying for her hand. It is very costly and correct. The frame consists of twenty very large diamonds, for which one might buy a whole principality. I requested the marshal to let me have it an hour, when he permitted me to see it during the visit I paid to him. I told him frankly I wished to take it to the emperor, who would show it to the archduchess, that she might have some notion of the real emperor, and receive his suit. The marshal granted my request, and intrusted the miniature to me."

"Did you bring it with you?"

"I did, your majesty. Here it is." Metternich drew a morocco case from his bosom and handed it to the emperor.

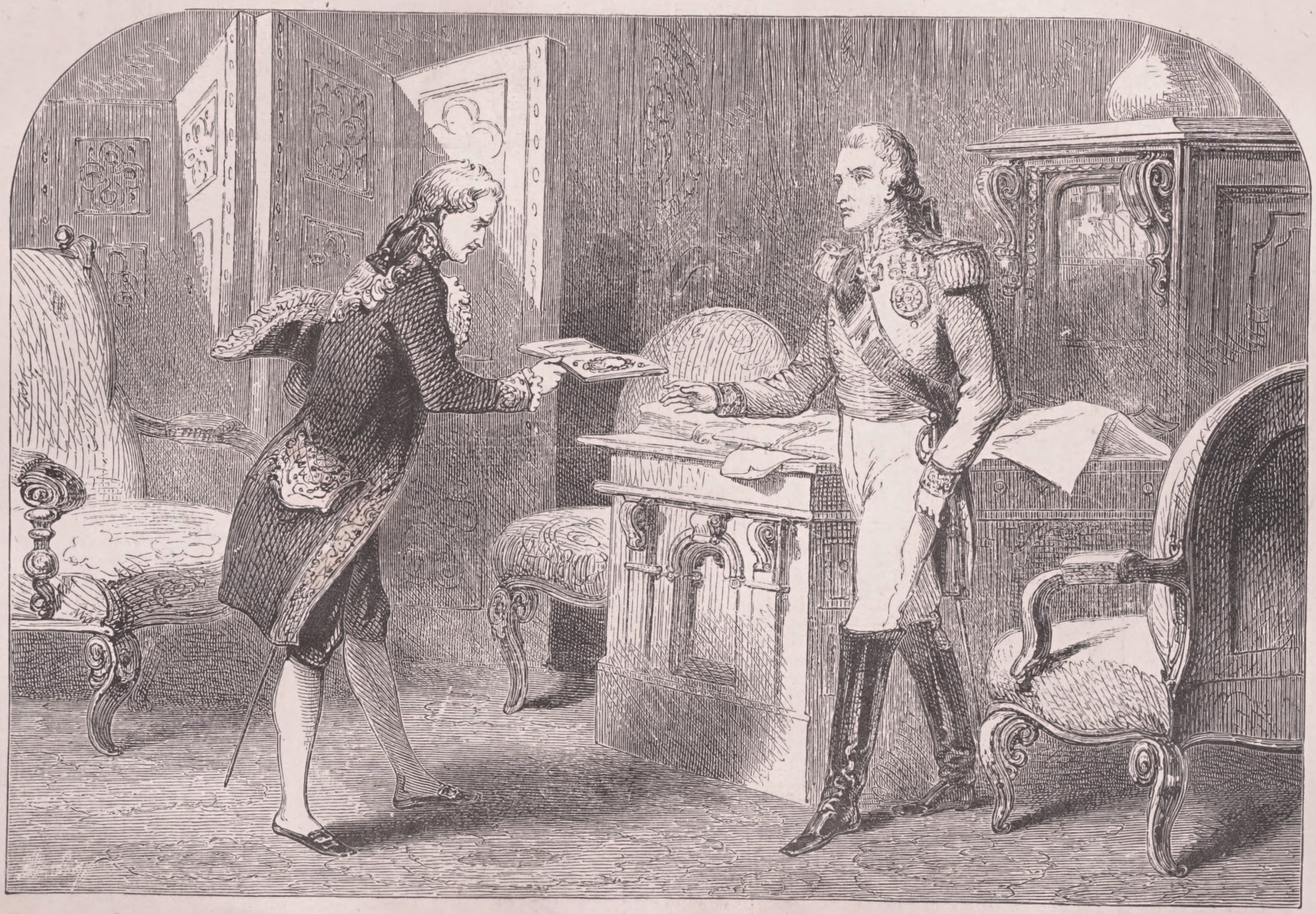
Francis opened it hastily, and contemplated the precious locket a good while. "These are splendid diamonds, indeed," he said, and I am convinced Bonaparte did not inherit them of his father. Not the slightest blemish, not a single imperfection in them; I believe I have no more beautiful diamonds in my crown!"

"And the resemblance?" asked Metternich. "Does not your majesty think that it is excellent?"

"Yes, yes," exclaimed Francis, laughing. "I had almost forgotten that, in admiring the precious stones. Yes, it is a good likeness; he looks precisely like that, but you must admit it is a revolting face, looking as though there were but one man in the world, and he were that man."

"But the expression of so much haughtiness impresses the ladies very favorably," said Metternich. "They like the man who loves to consider himself a god, and he is one in their eyes. I really believe it would be a good idea for your majesty to show this to the archduchess, and tell her afterward that it is the likeness of her future husband. If your majesty has no objection, I will, in the mean time, request an audience of the Empress Ludovica, and try to convince her majesty of the necessity of this marriage."

"Do so," exclaimed the emperor, joyously, "it will be very agreeable to me, and as soon as possible. In the mean time I will go to the archduchess, show her the miniature, and tell her plainly that it is that of her future husband. It is better to tell her so without circumlocution.



THE EMPEROR FRANCIS AND METTERNICH.

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The princess will not dare to oppose my wishes; she knows that it is the duty of an obedient daughter to accept the husband her father has selected for her. Go to the empress, Metternich; I shall go to the Archduchess Maria Louisa."

CHAPTER LV.

THE ARCHDUCHESS MARIA LOUISA.

THE imperial princes and princesses had just dined together, as had been their custom since the reign of the Emperor Joseph, and were still in the large dining-hall, which was also the play-room of the imperial children. The Emperor Francis, who had recently married his fourth wife, had children by his second marriage only, but numerous enough to secure the continued existence of the dynasty, and, at the same time, furnish beautiful princesses to other sovereign houses. Of these five daughters and two sons, Maria Louisa, who was seventeen years old, was the eldest. But though a grown young lady, she liked to be together with her younger brothers and sisters, and remained sometimes with them after dinner, in order to participate in their merry play and conversation. On this occasion, instead of returning with the mistress of ceremonies to her room, she remained with her brothers and sisters in the dining-hall. While the younger princes and princesses were engaged in playing round a large table, the two oldest, the archduchesses Maria Louisa and Leopoldine, retired into one of the bay-windows to converse without being disturbed.

It was a charming sight—those two young ladies standing in the niche, surrounded by curtains as in a frame, and whose beauty seemed to have caught a celestial radiance from the light beaming through the windows. Both were in the morning of their age, but Maria Louisa, the older sister, was even more attractive than Leopoldine. Thick ringlets of light-brown hair floated around her forehead. She had large azure eyes, telling of her happiness and the kindly emotions of her soul. Her finely-cut nose gave an aristocratic expression to her countenance, while her crimson lips, in their voluptuous fulness, contrasted not unfavorably with the remarkable refinement of the rest of her features. An enchanting smile played about her mouth, and spoke of her noble simplicity and innocence.

She encircled the neck of her younger sister with her arms, and was gazing at her with a tender expression. "Ah, Leopoldine," she said to her in a sweet voice, "how happy I am that we are at length together again! When I remained here ill and alone, and the enemy was besieging our capital, I was always thinking of none but you, and yearned to be again with you. But when the shells struck our palace, I thanked Heaven that you were not here, and had not to undergo the fear and anguish which I was enduring. When this Bonaparte arrived, I was suffering of the scarlet fever, but the terror brought on an attack of intermittent fever. I shall never forgive him. But, thank God, these evil times are over! Now we need not be afraid of being expelled again from the palace of our ancestors by this bad man, and of seeing our dear Schönbrunn degraded by the presence of his marshals. Now we can live happily and delightfully in undisturbed tranquillity."

"Yes, we can," said the Archduchess Leopoldine, smiling. "But do you not think, sister, that our life is indescribably monotonous and tedious at the present time? Our third mother, the Empress Ludovica, is certainly a very amiable, virtuous, and pious lady, but she really believes us still to be small children, who ought to remain in the nursery, and it does not occur to her that amusements are sometimes necessary for young princesses of our age. We have passed the whole winter in an intolerably quiet and wearisome manner; we are already in the latter part of February, and have not had a single ball at court. Ah, Louisa, it is, after all, not so very pleasant to be a princess. Other girls of our age are at liberty to indulge in a little pleasure, to attend balls, concerts, and parties, where they see new faces and interesting persons. We are forbidden all this. We must wait until diversion comes to us, and unfortunately we are not thought of at all! We are never allowed to pay visits or accept invitations. A formal court ball, where we may appear for a few hours, and dance with the most aristocratic cavaliers, is our only amusement, and at present we are deprived of that. We are guarded in our apartments like prisoners."

"Yes, it is true," sighed Maria Louisa, "and we have a very rigorous jailer in the Countess of Colloredo. Do you know, Leopoldine, that I have had a violent scene with the mistress of ceremonies to-day?"

"Ah, I am glad of it," exclaimed Leopoldine, laughing. "What was the matter?"

"I wanted to read, and requested the mistress of ceremonies to give me new books. She deferred it until to-day and brought me then one of the works I had asked for, 'the Maid of Orleans,' by

Schiller, but it was mutilated and disfigured like all books that are given to us. Whole pages had been cut out, and on those remaining were to be found black spots rendering whole lines and words illegible—a liberty which the mistress of ceremonies is in the habit of indulging in, in reference to all the books we read."

"Yes, it is true," sighed the younger archduchess, "we cannot read a single good book from beginning to end; and we are thus deprived of much pleasure. What did you do, dear sister?"

"I cast the book aside with horror, and requested her to let me have the latest newspapers. She brought them to me, but everywhere the same foul marks; not only all the news from France, but even the local Vienna items were almost illegible to-day; lines had been cut out, words erased, and half a column had entirely disappeared. I was almost beside myself at this treatment. I returned the papers and said, 'Madame, this is doubtless a mistake. I am sure these papers were intended for the nursery, that the little archduchesses might learn to spell; as for myself, I can both spell and read, and I request you, therefore, to give me legible books and newspapers.'"

"Oh," exclaimed Leopoldine, merrily clapping her hands, "that was glorious! You acted like a heroine, my dear sister!"

Maria Louisa smiled and added, "'Madame,' I went on to say, 'I cannot bear any longer this system of surveillance. It is insulting and repugnant to me to be treated like a child, and considered so weakminded as to be forbidden books which thousands of girls of my age are allowed to read. Or do you want to make me believe that all books and newspapers come to Austria in this mutilated condition? Oh, I know full well that the people would not submit to such a system of tyranny, and that, in case such efforts should be made to deprive them of their mental food, assuredly a revolution would break out, as in France at the time when my unfortunate aunt, Marie Antoinette, was on the throne.'"

"Did you say so?" asked Leopoldine, in surprise. "But where did you find the courage and the words?"

"I must avow to you that I had reflected about the matter for three days, and drawn up, and learned by heart, this little speech in order to address it to the mistress of ceremonies at the first opportunity. I am really tired of being treated so childishly, when I am a woman, and may expect soon to be married."

"Ah, married!" sighed Leopoldine. "Who knows to what dreadful princes we may be married? For, as a matter of course, we shall not be asked whether we like the match or not, and we shall not be as well off as the daughters of common citizens, who, as my maid told me, marry only those whom they love. We princesses must marry men whom we have never seen, with whom we exchange the first word only after our marriage, and whom perhaps we may not like at all."

"No matter, our marriage makes us free," exclaimed Maria Louisa, impatiently. "We are then at least our own mistresses, and need submit no longer to the restraints imposed on us. The example of our third mother, the Empress Ludovica, shows it. She has taken the liberty to pay no attention to etiquette, and holds a reception at her rooms every night from eight to ten o'clock, when she does not admit the ladies and gentlemen of the court, but invited persons, among whom there are frequently those who do not even belong to the aristocracy."

"She does not invite us to the evening parties," exclaimed Leopoldine, sneeringly. "Maybe we are too aristocratic for her. But you are right, Louisa—as soon as we are married, we shall also have the right to change rules of etiquette and live as we please."

"Do you know the first thing I am going to do after my marriage?" asked Maria Louisa, quickly. "I shall buy all the books that I have now, and peruse the cut-out and illegible passages. I am sure they are the most interesting and beautiful in the books, and I believe they all treat of love. Ah, Leopoldine, I should like to read for once a work containing a very romantic love-story, and over which one might dream. But, good Heaven! what makes the children shout so merrily? Come, let us see what they are doing."

"Come, let us play with them," exclaimed Leopoldine.

The princesses stepped arm in arm from the bay window and hastened to the table. The little archduchesses and their brothers, it seemed, were engaged in a highly-interesting game, which their governesses were witnessing with smiling attention. They were standing about the large round table, on which a small army of wax figures in green and blue uniforms had been placed in neatly-arranged rows. At the head of this army stood a somewhat larger figure of the most revolting appearance. It was a little fellow with hunched shoulders, a rotund stomach and an unnaturally large head. The face was of a black-and-green color, and had eyes of a ferocious expression, and a tremendous mouth without lips, showing rows of ugly yellow teeth. This figure was dressed in a

green uniform, with broad white facings, and on his head was a little cocked hat. Opposite this army of wax figures a row of small brass cannon was placed, and at their side lay diminutive bows, and arrows furnished with pins. The ammunition-wagons were filled with black peas.

The game had just commenced. The imperial children had opened the campaign against the hostile army of wax-figures. The little Archdukes Ferdinand and Francis Charles stood as gunners at the field-pieces, while the Archduchesses Caroline, Clementine, and Amelia, were armed with small bows. The gunners fired at the ranks of the soldiers; the archduchesses aimed at the terrible captain of the little army. Whenever an arrow hit him, or a cannon-ball struck down one of the soldiers, the children burst into loud cheers.

"What game is this?" asked Maria Louisa, contemplating with evident delight the blushing cheeks and bright eyes of her young brothers and sisters.

"That is the Bonaparte game," exclaimed little Archduke Francis Charles. "Papa emperor presented the game to me when we were at Ofen, and taught me how to play it. It is a long while since we played it, but to-day we will try it again. Look, sister Louisa, that horrible fellow in front of the soldiers is the villain Bonaparte, who is stealing the states of all the princes. He is made entirely of brass, and no arrow can injure him, but he has a vulnerable spot on the breast, where the heart is, that is made of wax. On shooting at him, you always have to aim there; if you hit it, the arrow remains, and you win the game and obtain the reward. Oh, I am well versed in the Bonaparte game; papa emperor was so gracious as to play it often with me at Ofen, when we were fleeing from that man; and his majesty taught me also how to insult Bonaparte. See, sisters!" and he took the little bow from the hands of the Archduchess Marianne, and laid an arrow on the string. "Now, you miserable fellow," he shouted in an angry voice and with flashing eyes, "now I will kill you without mercy! You thief, you stole Venice and Milan from us—you must die!" He discharged the arrow, but it glanced off from the figure.

"You missed him! you missed him!" shouted the little group.

"It is my turn now," exclaimed the little archduchess, taking the bow from her brother. She put an arrow on it, and, contracting her eyebrows and making her laughing little face assume an angry and menacing air, shouted, "Now tremble, you bad man! for I will put you to death because you drove us twice from Vienna, and frightened us so badly that you compelled us to escape, while you were enjoying yourself in our fine palaces. Yes, I will kill you, because you shot our soldiers and took our cannon. You are a wretch, a miserable thief, and I will now shoot you that you may no longer murder our men and expel our princes, you robber and assassin!" She discharged her arrow, but with no better success than the little archduke, and the laughter of her brothers and sisters punished her for her lack of skill.

"Why, this is a very pretty game," exclaimed the Archduchess Maria Louisa, laughing. "Come, Leopoldine, let us try it, and see whether we are able to hit the monster." The princesses sat down laughingly between the little archdukes, and each took one of the bows.

"Pray let me shoot first, dear sister," exclaimed Leopoldine, eagerly. "Look, my arrow lies already on the string. Now I will aim at you, miserable Bonaparte, and take revenge for all the sufferings you have brought upon us. Your last hour has come; fold your hands and pray, if you can. But you cannot pray, for you have a conscience burdened with crimes; you have sinned grievously against God by insulting and imprisoning His representative on earth. The Holy Father has excommunicated you for this, and you are accursed, delivered over to the tortures of hell, and every honest Christian turns away from the wretch against whom the bolt of excommunication has been hurled. You must die without confession and absolution—in the midst of your sins." She discharged the arrow, but, like those of her little brother and sister, it glanced from the figure and dropped at its feet.

The little archduchesses and princes, who, on hearing the imprecations uttered by their sister, had assumed a very grave air, felt as though they had been relieved of an oppressive burden, and burst into loud laughter.

"It is my turn now!" exclaimed Maria Louisa. She took the bow and fixed her blue eyes with an expression of profound contempt on the repulsive figure. "You must die—ay, die!" she said, gravely. "Bonaparte, I will deliver the world from you, for you are as insatiable as the Minotaur, that required every day a human victim for breakfast. You devour men and countries, and the wails of whole nations are music to your ears. You must die, also, because you look so horrible! God has marked you, and given you a monstrous body, because your soul is that of a monster. I will kill you, therefore, that you may no longer frighten mankind!" She put the arrow on the string and shot.

A loud shout resounded. The arrow remained in the figure. Maria Louisa had hit Bonaparte.

"Hurrah, the Archduchess Maria Louisa has killed Bonaparte!" cried the little ones. "The monster is dead! The robber lives no more! The wretch and villain!"

"Why, what is going on here? Whom are you abusing so shockingly?" asked a voice behind them, and the children, turning around, saw their father, the Emperor Francis, who had entered unnoticed by them.

"We are abusing the malicious robber, papa emperor," exclaimed the Archduchess Marianne, pointing at the figure.

"Your majesty, dear papa emperor," exclaimed little Francis Charles, eagerly—"only think of it, Maria Louisa has hit the heart of Bonaparte. The monster is dead; he is unable now to steal any thing more from us!"

"Sancta Maria!" cried the emperor, "how can you use such language, my son? How can you utter such disrespectful epithets about the illustrious Emperor Napoleon?"

The boy looked at his father in dismay. "Your majesty," he said, timidly, "you yourself told me Napoleon could not be abused enough, and a genuine Hapsburg ought to execrate the infamous robber. Those were your majesty's own words, papa!"

"Oh, I was only joking," exclaimed the emperor, angrily, "and a clever prince, like you, ought to have noticed it at once. But I am talking in earnest now, and forbid you playing this stupid game any more, or uttering another word against the Emperor Napoleon. He is a very illustrious, and moreover an excellent man—a very great emperor—whom every one loves and praises."

"Papa emperor," cried the Archduke Francis Charles, wonderingly, "but your majesty told me at Ofen that every one was abhorring Bonaparte, and—"

"You are a pert little fool!" replied the emperor, vehemently. "What I said then has no sense now. For at that time we were at war, and Napoleon was our enemy. But now we have made peace, and he is our friend, and so dear a friend, that I would willingly intrust to him my most precious treasure; I am sure he would honor and cherish it! Listen to my orders, therefore, all of you: do not utter another word against the Emperor Napoleon. We all love and admire him, and that stupid game must never be played again. It must be laid aside forever."

The children were frightened and downcast; the emperor turned from them, and beckoned to the Archduchess Maria Louisa to follow him. "I came to see you at your rooms," he said; "the mistress of ceremonies told me that I would find you here. I want to speak to you."

"Your majesty was very gracious to come to me instead of sending for me," said the archduchess, bowing to her father. "Does your majesty command me to follow you to your cabinet?"

"No, just step with me into this window-niche," said the emperor; "I will not detain you long. I wish to show you something." He stepped with the princess into the last window-niche, and closed the curtain. "Now look," he said, "I want to show you a miniature, and you must tell me how you like it." He opened the locket and presented it to the archduchess. She gazed at it long and musingly, and a blush suffused her cheeks. "Well! what do you think of this man?"

"Your majesty, he must be a very great and distinguished man," exclaimed the archduchess. "It is a countenance that makes my heart throb; it is more than merely fine-looking, it is sublime! How much majesty is enthroned on that brow, and yet the smile seems petulant and childlike; but the eyes are magnificent."

"Look at him carefully," said the emperor, "and do not restrain your feelings, but fall in love with him. For let me tell you a secret, Louisa; it is the likeness of your future husband."

A deeper blush crimsoned the face of the archduchess, and half ashamed, half anxious, she fixed her eyes again on the miniature.

"Yes," added the emperor, in a graver tone, "it is the portrait of your husband, and you will receive this very day his ambassador, who will apply to you for your hand. He has already received my consent, and I am sure my daughter knows her duty, and will accept obediently the husband I have destined for her."

"Yes," whispered the archduchess, "I know that to be my duty, and shall humbly submit to the will and commands of my emperor and father."

"And it is a grand destiny that Providence offers you," said the emperor, gravely. "You are to preserve peace to the world, my daughter; you are to be the bond of reconciliation between those who have hitherto hated and waged war with each other."

"Sire," exclaimed the archduchess," anxiously, "your majesty did not tell me whose likeness this is?"

"And whom I have determined to become your husband," added the emperor. "I will tell you now, but be courageous and brave, my daughter,

and remember that you must obey me unconditionally."

"I shall not forget to do so, your majesty."

"Well, then, did I not, on entering this room, hear the children rejoice at your having hit the heart of the Emperor Napoleon?"

"I was playing with the children, your majesty, and—"

"And your play is to become earnest now, and you are to take pains to conquer Bonaparte's heart, that he may love and trust you. For, my daughter, this miniature, which you pronounced so fine-looking, is a correct likeness of the Emperor Napoleon, who will become your husband."

The Archduchess Maria Louisa uttered a cry, and tottered to the wall.

Her father clasped her in his arms, and placed her gently on the easy-chair standing in the niche. The cheeks of Maria Louisa had turned livid, her eyes were closed, and her arms hung down by her side.

"It is strange how easily women faint!" muttered the emperor. "I found that to be the case with all my wives. When they do not know how to do any thing better, they faint. All four of mine did, but they always revived, and so will Louisa. I like it much better that she should faint than that she should weep. She knows now what she had to know, and will act accordingly." He opened the curtain, and stepped back into the room. "Leopoldine!" he shouted to the archduchess, "step in here to your sister, Maria Louisa. She has swooned, but it is of no consequence! Tell her to wake up, and conduct her to her room. She will tell you what has happened to her."

CHAPTER LVI.

THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY.

THERE were great rejoicings in Berlin. It was the 10th of March, the queen's birthday, and she celebrated it again at the capital for the first time in three years. Every one hastened to manifest his love and sympathy for the queen, and all classes had sent in requests for permission to choose committees to present their congratulations to her majesty. The queen had cheerfully granted these requests, and the deputations of the old aristocracy, the states, the clergy, the municipality, the academy, the painters, and other artists, the mechanics, and citizens, were assembled in the large hall of the royal palace, waiting her arrival.

The folding-doors at length opened, and the queen, preceded by the grand-marshal of the court, entered. She looked pale and exhausted, but received with affability and grace the cheers given by the assembly at her appearance, and walked slowly down the long line of the deputations, addressing a kind word or casting a grateful glance to every one, and charming all by her beauty, gentleness, and majesty. Suddenly her countenance brightened, and she approached a tall, stout gentleman standing in the midst of the committee of the artists. "M. Manager Iffland," * she said, "let me bid you welcome. I expected to see you here to-day, in order to express once more my thanks for the joy you afforded me on my last birthday, and for the sufferings you underwent for my sake. But I should like to hear an account of the event from your own lips, and I ask of you, as a birthday present, to relate to me what happened to you last year on this day."

While uttering these words, the queen stepped back into the middle of the hall, and thereby compelled Iffland to leave the committee, and follow her. "Your majesty is really too kind to remember so insignificant an occurrence," said Iffland, bowing respectfully. "I was on that day only so happy as to give expression to the feelings animating all. 'Queen Louisa, our royal lady!' that was the motto encouraging us to bear up under the foreign yoke; it was our consolation when we thought of his majesty, our beloved king. However galling our chains might have been, we felt comfort. 'The royal lady is with him!' we said to each other, and with grateful tears every one remembered his queen."

"Yes, it is true," exclaimed the queen with feeling, "we met with much love and fidelity during the years of affliction, and to-day I thank from the bottom of my heart all those who were faithful to us." Her eyes gazed long and affectionately on the brilliant circle of those assembled, and she then turned again to Iffland. "Well, how was it on my birthday last year?" she asked. "Tell me, but speak loudly, that every one may hear."

"Last year on this day we were not as happy as we are to-day," said Iffland. "Our queen was not with us, and we could not let her read in our eyes the love and fidelity which we had been forbidden from manifesting toward her by word or deed. The French authorities had issued stringent orders everywhere, that the citizens should abstain from any allusions to or recollections of our queen's birthday, and that no demonstrations whatever should be made. We were

* The celebrated German actor.

obliged to submit to the petty tyranny, but our hearts were filled with anger, and the love which we could not assert was strengthened in its concealment. It needed only a spark to bring about an explosion, and the theatre was so fortunate as to kindle this spark in the hearts of the loyal Prussians. On the evening of that 10th of March, a small family drama which I had written was to be performed. It was the simple and affecting history of a family celebrating happily the reunion of a mother and her children. The mother's name was Louisa, and this name was sufficient to fill the house with a distinguished audience. All felt that the theatre was on that day the only place where the public heart, devoted to the queen, was allowed to throb for her; where glances could be exchanged and understood, and where it was permitted to whisper, 'It is her birthday to-day! Heaven bless her!' Every seat was occupied in the galleries as well as in the dress-circle, in the orchestra stalls as well as in the pit, everywhere reigned the same joyous commotion. Only in the boxes of the French, faces were seen that cast an angry and hostile expression on that audience. —The curtain rose, and the performance commenced. The actor Lange and myself appeared in the first scene. Lange had to play the part of a friend of the house, happening to arrive there on that day. I represented the son of Louisa, the mother, and appeared on the stage with a large bouquet on my breast. 'Why do you look so happy and well-dressed to-day?' said Lange. 'I suppose you are celebrating a family festival?' 'Yes!' I exclaimed in a loud and joyous voice, 'we are celebrating a family festival, and it is a beautiful festival; we are celebrating the return of our beloved mother, God bless her! God bless the dear lady who is to receive these flowers!' Carried away by my enthusiasm, I tore the bouquet from my breast, and held it out toward the audience. Moved by one and the same feeling of love and admiration, the whole assembly rose, and thousands of voices shouted, as it were with one mouth and from one heart, 'God bless her! God bless the dear lady—the adored mother!' Oh, queen, it was a sublime moment, and God counted the tears and understood the prayers that we addressed to Him. He has restored to us our queen, the beloved mother of her country and people!"

The queen at first listened smilingly; gradually, however, her countenance became grave. She was standing with profound emotion in front of Iffland, when he concluded his narrative, and tears dropped from her downcast eyes. Silence reigned in the vast hall, and all faces were turned to the queen. She raised her eyes slowly, and directed them toward Iffland with an expression of indescribable kindness. "I thank you," said Louisa; "you stood faithfully by your queen at a time when many were deserting her. You have been a faithful knight of mine, and the king, therefore, wants you to retain always the title of knight. He permits me to give you to-day another decoration instead of the bouquet you wore on your breast a year ago. In the name of his majesty I have to present to you the insignia of the order of the Red Eagle."

A pallor overspread Iffland's countenance, while he received the order which the queen handed to him. "O queen," he said, deeply affected, "such an honor to me, the actor! I thank your majesty in the name of all my colleagues, from whom you have removed at this moment the interdict excluding them from the honors and dignities of other men."

The queen smiled. "It is true," she said, "I believe you are the first actor who ever received an order in Prussia. And are you not indeed the first actor? However, you owe us still the conclusion of your narrative. You described to us the scene at the theatre, but not the disagreeable consequences of the occurrence."

"Ah! your majesty," exclaimed Iffland, smiling, "the consequences were easy to bear after the sublime moment which I had witnessed. I was imprisoned for forty-eight hours at the French guard-house, where they put me on a diet of bread and water. That was all."

"I thank you for suffering so cheerfully for me," said the queen, dismissing Iffland with a pleasant nod. "Would I were able to reward all those who have suffered for us, and endured persecution in love and patience, and to return days of joy for days of sorrow!"

Iffland, who looked proud and happy, stepped back among the members of his committee, and Louisa continued her walk, uttering words of gratitude and acknowledgment, and charming all by her winning and withal queenly bearing.

After the reception was over, she returned to her apartments. The smile disappeared from her lips, and her countenance assumed a melancholy expression. She motioned to her two ladies of honor to leave her, and remained alone with her confidante, Madame von Berg. "Oh, Caroline," sighed the queen, "I can bear it no longer. My heart succumbs under these tortures. They call this day a holiday, but to me it is a day of terror. To-night a party at the palace—a banquet previous to it,—and I must be gay, though suffering severe pain! My heart is bleeding, and yet

I am to dance, address pleasant words to every one, and assume an appearance of happiness. I do not know whither to escape with my grief! To whom will Prussia belong a year hence? Wither shall we all be scattered? God have mercy on us!"

"Your majesty views the situation in too gloomy a light," said Madame von Berg, consolingly. "No further events have occurred that need alarm you."

"No further events!" exclaimed the queen, vehemently. "You do not know, then, Caroline, that Count Krusemark arrived from Paris this morning?"

"No," replied Madame von Berg, anxiously; "I do not know any thing about it. What is the meaning of this unexpected arrival of the ambassador?"

"A new calamity is threatening us. Count Krusemark is the bearer of a letter from Napoleon to the king. Oh, Caroline, what a letter it is! One cannot help blushing with shame and anger on reading it, and yet it is necessary for us to be silent. Napoleon menaces because the war contributions are not promptly paid: he talks as a superior to his inferior who neglects his duty; he scolds as a schoolmaster does his pupil who has not learned his task. And we must bear it, we must stoop so low as to beg him to be indulgent! Caroline, we must now solicit the forbearance of the man who has insulted us by every word he addressed to us, and by every look he cast upon us. For do you really know what he threatens to do? He writes that if the king does not immediately pay up the arrears of the war contributions, he will send an army to Prussia, to collect the money, and punish the king for his breach of faith. He will send another army to Prussia!—that is to say, the war is to begin anew, and, as we have become powerless, and cannot defend our frontiers, he means to crush us. He will take every thing, and Prussia will cease to exist. And we cannot pay, we have no means to obtain those millions so unjustly claimed!"

"But the ministers will devise means to pay the contribution, dearest queen; the minister of finance will be able to suggest a scheme to fulfil the engagements that have been entered into, and to discharge the claims which Napoleon has against us."

The queen laughed scornfully. "Baron von Altenstein, the minister of finance, is not of your opinion," she said. "The king asked him to suggest measures by which the liabilities we had incurred might be discharged. But Altenstein replied that he did not know of any, and he then proposed to the king to pay the debt by ceding the province of Silesia to Napoleon."

"Dreadful!" exclaimed Madame von Berg, indignantly. "A Prussian minister does not shrink from advising the king, although we are at peace, to sacrifice the best province that has remained, and which even the defeats of Jena and Friedland, and the intriguing days of Tilsit did not endanger!"

"And if we do not consent to such a sacrifice (and we shall not), what next?" exclaimed the queen, despairingly. "Napoleon will send his army and expel or imprison us, as he treated the unfortunate royal family of Spain. Oh, Caroline, I shall be uneasy night and day. Dreadful apprehensions are constantly meeting me. I think of Spain, and fears oppress me lest my husband have the same fate as King Charles. Believe me, his life, his liberty is threatened, and he is every day in danger of being suddenly seized and taken away as a hostage, until we have fulfilled the behests of the tyrant, and given him all that still belongs to us—our honor, our crown, and, perhaps, our lives. We are surrounded by French spies: every word, every look, is watched; only a pretext is sought to ruin us, and it will be found, as it was in Spain. Oh, he will take my husband from me! he will drag him as a prisoner from one place to another as he did the King of Spain; he will sow the seeds of discord in our family as he did in that unhappy country. He, the tyrant Napoleon, brought about a quarrel between the Infante and his father; he compelled, with his iron hand, the unfortunate King Charles to write that his son's guilt had raised a barrier between father and son. But whose hand was it that constructed it? Can there be any doubt? It was his alone! Oh, will there be a time, and shall I live to see it, when the hand of God will at length write the 'Mene, mene, tekel,' on his wall?"

"Your majesty will live to see that time," exclaimed Madame von Berg. "You will witness the judgment of Heaven and of the nations overthrowing the tyrant."

The queen shook her head. "No," she whispered, "I shall not live to see it. I think this will be the last time that I celebrate my birthday here." *

"Oh, Louisa," cried Madame von Berg, bursting into tears, "do not utter such cruel, heart-rending words. You will live, you must live, for the consolation and joy of us all. It would be an injustice, and we should despair of divine

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* The queen's own words.

equity, if our queen depart without having seen again the days of deliverance and happiness."

"My dear, Providence permits such acts of injustice," said Louisa, with a mournful smile. "Was it just that noble Palm should be shot, that Schill had to fall, and to be stigmatized as a deserter for his heroic actions? Was it just that Andrew Hofer had to expiate his glorious struggle for freedom by his death? The Emperor of Austria was in the same position as we were. He had to sacrifice Andrew Hofer as we Ferdinand von Schill. The cruel hand of the tyrant rested on him as it did on us. And now they have shot the brave, heroic leader of the Tyrolese at Mantua! My soul mourns for him, for I hoped in him. It is but recently that I understood Schiller's words, 'On the mountains there is freedom!' They resounded in my heart like a prophecy, when in my thought I looked over to the mountaineers who had risen at Hofer's call. My heart fought at his side! And what a man this dear, honest, simple Andrew Hofer was! A peasant who had become a general, and what a general! His weapon—prayer! His ally—God! He fought with folded hands, with bended knees, and struck down the enemy as with a cherub's sword. And the brave Tyrolese were fighting with him—children in the simplicity of their hearts, they fought like Titans, by hurling down rocks from the summits of their fastnesses. And yet it was all in vain! They were sacrificed, and their leader was shot by the man who to-morrow marries the daughter of their emperor. And you doubt that Providence permits acts of injustice? Oh, I do not doubt that God is just, but we mortals are often unable to comprehend his justice, because our life is too short to witness the result of that of which we have seen only the inception; but He knows the end from the beginning. And an end will come for Napoleon with all his glory. But shall I or any of us ever live to witness it?"

"All of us will," said Madame von Berg; "our belief in the final retribution of Divine justice will give us our strength, I hope, for many years."

"I shall not live to see that blessed time," said the queen, solemnly. "This man, who is to be married to a German princess to-morrow, has wounded my heart so that it will at last destroy me. I do not speak figuratively, but mean what I say. There is something in my heart that leaves me no rest night and day. Its palpitations strike like a death-watch. There is something gnawing there incessantly; at times I feel that it has nearly pierced my life, that death is surely near. And I am dying of the wretchedness and disgrace which he who is enthroned in France has brought upon Prussia! I am dying, and he will win further triumphs; the whole of Europe will lie prostrate at his feet, and his songs of victory will be my dirge, leaving me no rest even in my grave. But hush, hush! Let us say no more. I have allowed you to look into the depths of my soul. You, my friend, are the only one to whom I sometimes raise the veil covering my bleeding heart. But tell no one what you have seen; keep my secret a little while longer, my dear Caroline. —And how is your friend, excellent Baron von Stein? You told me yesterday you had received letters from him. What does he write? Where does he live?"

"He lives in Brünn; his wife and children have joined him, and his life therefore is outwardly at least less sad than formerly. He is in constant communication with the prominent statesmen of Germany; all patriots hope in him, and receive advice and consolation from him. He is preparing quietly and secretly the great work of deliverance, which, when completed, will delight the eyes of my queen and receive her blessing. His eyes are constantly turned toward Prussia, and it is his profoundest sorrow that he is not permitted in these times to devote his services to the king."

"Yes," said the queen, sighing, "it is the terrible misfortune of the king that, in times so calamitous as these, he is deprived of the assistance of the patriotic men who alone would be able to save him and the state. The tyrannous decrees of Napoleon have taken his noblest and best servants from him. Stein is in exile. Hardenberg has to keep aloof from us because the emperor so ordered it. We might have ministers competent to hold the helm of the ship of state and take her successfully into port, but we are not allowed to employ them. Our interests are consequently intrusted to weak and ill-disposed ministers, who will ruin them, and we shall perish, unless assistance come soon—very soon! Stein and Hardenberg are exiled, and we have only Minister Altenstein, who is bold enough to propose the voluntary cession of Silesia to the king! Oh, my beloved, unfortunate Prussia, where is there a prospect of safety for thee?—Ah, the worm is again at my heart—oh, it oppresses me so that I can scarcely breathe! Tell me, Caroline, what else has Baron von Stein written to you?"

"He describes the deep and painful impression which the marriage of the Archduchess Maria Louisa with the Emperor Napoleon has made throughout Austria. There was no rejoicing, for

all regarded it as another humiliation of Austria—as a chain by which she fastens herself to France, and makes herself a vassal of a powerful enemy. The Viennese particularly received the intelligence with profound indignation, and even seditious gatherings took place, which had to be dispersed by the troops. In their sorrow, the inhabitants of the Austrian capital consoled themselves with a little wit; for, on the day when the Viennese had to illuminate their city in honor of the betrothal, the populace, marching through the streets, reached the residence of the French ambassador, and shouted in a loud and scornful tone: 'Napoleon is now ruined! We have at last played him a trick! We have inoculated him with Austrian bad luck and Austrian stupidity!'" *

The queen laughed. "That sounds very silly, and does not indicate much self-esteem, but there is a deep meaning in it after all. A connection with Austria has always been disastrous to France. Louis XVI. died of his marriage with Marie Antoinette, and Napoleon will not derive much benefit from his with the archduchess. He intends to strengthen his empire by this step, but it will alienate his own people from him. By this connection with an old dynasty he recedes from the people and from the liberal ideas of the revolution, which enabled him to ascend the throne. If this throne should ever be shaken, he would find that Austria will not support him."

"It will be shaken and fall!" exclaimed Madame von Berg. "There is an ominous commotion everywhere. Spain is the first fruit of the new era about to dawn upon us. She has not yet been conquered, nor will she be, notwithstanding Napoleon's high-sounding phrases and so-called victories. She is as a rock that will first break the waves of his haughty will. As a proof of the hatred prevailing in Spain, Baron von Stein sent me a page from the catechism, which the priests are teaching the people at the present time, and he added to it a few passages from the new French catechism. Will your majesty permit me to read them?"

"Read," exclaimed the queen; "pray, dear Caroline, let me hear them!"

Madame von Berg drew several papers from her pocket. "Let us first be edified by the Spanish catechism, if it please your majesty," and she read:

"Who are you, my child?"

"A Spaniard, by the grace of God."

"What does that mean?"

"A man of honor."

"Who is our enemy?"

"The Emperor of the French."

"What is the Emperor of the French?"

"A villain, the source of all evil."

"How many natures has he?"

"Two. A human and a diabolical nature."

"How many Emperors of the French are there?"

"One emperor in three."

"What are their names?"

"Napoleon, Murat, and Manuel Godoy."

"Which is the worst?"

"They are all equally bad."

"Whence does Napoleon come?"

"From sin."

"Murat?"

"From Napoleon."

"Godoy?"

"From both."

"What are the French?"

"Christians who have become heretics."

"What punishment deserves the Spaniard who neglects his duties?"

"The death and disgrace of a traitor."

"Is it a sin to kill a Frenchman?"

"No, a man gains heaven by killing one of the heretical dogs."

"Horrible!" exclaimed the queen, shuddering. "But that is their catechism, and these are the doctrines which are actually taught the people, and which filled them with such desperate courage at Saragossa. And now, Caroline, let me hear something of the French catechism."

"Here is a passage reading; 'To honor and serve our Emperor Napoleon, is to honor and serve God Himself, for it is he whom the Lord has given to us, that he may restore the holy faith of our fathers and to rule over us with wisdom and firmness. He is the anointed of the Lord, owing to the consecration he has received at the hands of the pope, the head of the Holy Catholic Church. Those who would not fulfil their duties to the Emperor Napoleon would rebel against the will of God, and be doomed eternally.'"

"That is the fanaticism of a man who believes in nothing but himself, and whom this self-deification nevertheless will one day hurl into the abyss," exclaimed the queen. "But hark, it strikes twelve! The king will soon be here to take me to the palace. I will dress, for I must not keep him long waiting. Ah, there he is already!" Louisa rose quickly from the sofa and hastened toward the king, who entered the room. Madame von Berg withdrew quietly, and the king and the queen remained alone.

* Hormayr, vol. i., p. 89, and other historians relate this occurrence.

The king took the hands which the queen extended toward him, and pressed them tenderly to his lips. "I come, perhaps, earlier than you expected," he said, "but I wished to see my beloved Louisa on this festive day, before she again becomes the queen. It seems to me I have not yet seen you to-day. Since early morning the people offering congratulations and presents have perfectly besieged the house."

"That is the consequence of celebrating my birthday in Berlin, my friend," exclaimed the queen laughing; "it is your just punishment for refusing to spend the day with me and the children quietly at our dear Parez, as we always used to do."

"I could not do that," said the king, gravely. "I had to give our subjects an opportunity to manifest their love for you and to indemnify them for the last three years, when they were unable to do so. But do you know, Louisa, why I come now? I should like to present you two acceptable gifts."

"More gifts?" exclaimed the queen, almost reproachfully. "Your love has lavished so many costly and beautiful presents on me to-day that I hardly know what you may give me."

"You need not be afraid, for the gifts are not very expensive; they are only two pieces of paper, They will not make your casket heavier, but I hope they will render your heart lighter. Here is the first." He drew a letter from his bosom and handed it to the queen. "Read the address," he said.

The queen read: "'To his excellency, Count von Hardenberg, at present at the farm of Grohnde.'—What?" she asked, looking joyously at the king. "My friend, you have yourself written to Hardenberg?"

The king nodded. "I myself," he said.

"And what did you write to him?"

"I requested him to come to me without delay, if he feel strong enough, and resume his former position at the head of the government."

"But you know Napoleon does not want Hardenberg to be your minister."

"I am now again, and intend remaining, master in my own country."

"Napoleon ordered that Hardenberg should not come within twenty leagues of the place where the king resides. Remember, dear friend, he is proscribed."

"But I disregard this proscription, and call Hardenberg to my side. If he is courageous enough he will come, and when he is here we shall take pains to pacify the emperor's wrath. He is at present too busily engaged in arranging his wedding festivities, and in preparing for the reception of his young wife; he will not have time to notice that the little King of Prussia has chosen another minister. We shall try to manage the matter as prudently as possible, and prevail upon Napoleon to leave Hardenberg at the head of my cabinet. I cannot do any thing with a minister who proposes to me to sacrifice the province of Silesia, and to sell loyal subjects like cattle. I will dismiss Altenstein, and appoint Hardenberg in his place. I have called him. If he is a good patriot, he will come; he must write a penitent letter to the emperor, that he may permit him to remain with us." *

"Oh, he will come, my friend, and also write the letter," exclaimed the queen.

"And do you approve my resolution to intrust Hardenberg with Altenstein's department?" asked the king.

"Approve it? My heart rejoices at it! Now I have hopes again of Prussia; now I look full of confidence into the future, for Hardenberg is a true German patriot, who has the honor and dignity of his country at heart, who does not want us to become mere vassals of France, and who will not propose to sacrifice provinces when we may discharge our liabilities with money. Oh, my dear, beloved friend, how grateful I am to you for this joyful surprise! This paper is my most precious birthday gift, and it really makes my heart glad."

"But I have another paper which will afford you pleasure," said the king, drawing it from his bosom. "Here, my dear, affectionate Princess of Mecklenburg, here is my second gift!"

He placed a folded paper into the hands of the queen. She opened it, and a joyous cry burst from her lips. "'Passenger ticket for Queen Louisa, good for a trip to Mecklenburg-Strelitz,'" she read, laughing. "'First travelling companion: Frederick William.' I am to go to Mecklenburg," cried the queen, joyously, "and you will accompany me? Oh, my beloved husband, you have divined, then, the most secret and ardent wish of my heart, and you grant it even before my lips have uttered it! Oh, how shall I thank you, my own dear friend?" She encircled the king's

* Hardenberg complied immediately with the king's request, and came to Potsdam, where he had a long interview with him, and declared his readiness to resume his position at the head of the administration. He submitted also to the galling necessity of conciliating Napoleon by an humble letter, in which he assured the emperor of his devotedness to France, and promised that the war-contributions should be promptly paid. Napoleon was favorably impressed with this letter, and ceased to object to Hardenberg's appointment.

neck with her arms, with passionate tenderness, and pressed a long kiss on his lips. "Dear, dear husband, how shall I thank you?" she whispered, once more with tearful eyes.

The king looked at her long and lovingly. "That you are with me is my greatest happiness. I was thinking to-day of a poem written by good old Claudius; it expresses my own feelings. It is an echo of my heart's gratitude!"

"What poem is it?" asked the queen.

Frederick William laid his hand on her head, raised his eyes toward heaven, and said aloud:

"Ich danke dir mein Wohl, mein Glück in diesem Leben,
Ich war wohl klug, dass ich dich fand;
Doch ich fand nicht, Gott hat dich mir gegeben,
So segnet keines Menschen Hand!"*

CHAPTER LVII.

LOUISA'S DEATH.

THE happy and long-yearned-for day, the 25th of June, had dawned at last. The queen's wish was to be fulfilled; she was to set out for her old Mecklenburg home, for her paternal roof at Neustrelitz. The king intended to follow her thither in a few days, for he was detained in Berlin by state affairs; they were then to go with her family to the ducal country-seat of Hohenzieritz, and thence to return to Berlin.

How had the queen longed for this day! how joyously had she awaited the moment when she was to see her old home again! Even her separation from her beloved children, from her husband, did not shade her beautiful countenance. She was to miss her children but for a short time, and her husband was to join her at the earliest moment; she could therefore yield to the joy with which the prospect of seeing her father and his family, and of returning to her old home, filled her heart.

Home! The carriage rolled from the palace-gate of Charlottenburg, and the green fields as she passed had never seemed so beautiful. But her eyes were often turned to the sky, and she gazed on the white clouds floating over it as swans on an azure lake. "Precede me, clouds! inform my father and my brothers that I am coming!" she exclaimed, smiling. "Oh, why does not my soul unfold its wings, and carry me home through the air? The horses are too slow!"

And yet the horses were running along the turnpike, swiftly passing towns and villages, fields and meadows. The queen, in her impatience, counted the relays. We are already at Gransee; the next town will be on Mecklenburg soil. The frontier of my father's state is between Gransee and Fürstenberg. Forward! home! home!"

"Queen, here we are on the frontier! Here is Mecklenburg!" exclaimed Madame von Berg.

"Mecklenburg!" said the queen, smiling. "Hail my native country!" And she kissed her hands to the landscape spread out before her in all its summer beauty. "I greet and kiss thee, my Mecklenburg! I return with a faithful heart!"

Why did the queen start up so suddenly, and press her hands so anxiously against her heart? "Oh, Caroline," she whispered, "the death-worm, the death-worm! Could it not be still at this moment? Could it not let me enjoy the bliss of this hour? Oh, how it tortures my heart!"

"O queen, why such gloomy thoughts now? Look at the sky, how bright it is!—how mild and pleasant the air—the air of Mecklenburg!"

"The air of my native country is fanning my face, but the death-worm is at work in my heart. The gates of my home above will soon be thrown open for me! But hush! Why put this drop of wormwood into the cup of joy? I will not drink it, I will not listen to my palpitating heart! Let us see whether I am stronger than my pain. I will laugh and be happy!"

And the queen, leaning forward with smiling countenance, said: "I greet thee, my Mecklenburg, with thy waving wheat-fields and fragrant meadows, thy transparent lakes and forest oaks, and, above all, thy ruddy sons and daughters! Look, Caroline, what sunny waves are passing over those ripening fields, bringing to the farmer the fruits of his labor. Look at that pretty scene yonder! At the door of the lonely cottage, in the middle of the rye-field, sits a peasant's wife; her babe is resting on her breast, and three flaxen-haired children are playing at her feet. She does not see us; she sees nothing but her children, and sings to them. Stop, that I may hear the song of the good young mother!" The carriage halted. The wind swept across the plain, and played with the white veil of the queen, who listened with bated breath to the lullaby of the peasant's wife:

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* On thee my joy, my hopes rely!
How wise to win thee mine!
But surely it was Heaven—not I,
That made me ever thine.

To thee, my loving spouse, I owe
Whate'er of good may be,
Nor could a human hand bestow
This priceless gift on me.

" Oh, schlop, mihn lewes, lüttes Kind,
Oh, schlop un dröhm recht schön!
Denn alle Engel bi di sünd
Un Gott, de het di sehn.
Leev Gott het alle Minschen gihrn,
De Kinner doch am leevsten,
Drüm wenn wi man wi Kinner wirn,
Denn har uns Gott am leevsten!
Oh, schlop, mihn lewes, lüttes Kind,
Oh, schlop, und dröhm recht schön!"*

The queen laughed with delight. "That is a Mecklenburg *patois* song," she exclaimed, "and yet how sweetly it sounds; how gentle and winning, as though it were the language of the heart! My native country has greeted me now with its most tender notes, with the song that the mother sings to her children! Forward! I am also a child of Mecklenburg, and long for my father's kiss and the embrace of my dear old grandmother!"

"There are the spires of a town in Mecklenburg! the spires of Fürstenberg!"

The carriage rolled through the gloomy old gate, and halted in front of the palace.

"My father! My beloved father!"

"My daughter! My beloved Louisa! Welcome!—a thousand times welcome!" They embraced each other and wept with joy. He is no duke, she is no queen; he is a father, and she is his child!

From the arms of her father she sank into those of her brother—her darling George. "Oh, thanks, dear father and brother, thanks for this surprise! Now I shall have two hours of happiness more than I hoped for, for I thought I would meet you only at Neustrelitz."

"Come now, my daughter, come; the horses are ready, and your old grandmother is longing for you."

"Grandmamma, I am coming!" exclaimed the queen, and entered the carriage as merrily as a light-hearted child. Her father and brother were at her side, and the ladies of the queen took seats in the duke's coach.

"Forward, home!" Her hands clasping those of her father and her brother, the queen rode across the meadows and waving fields. Was the death-worm still at her heart? Which will triumph, that or the queen? She did triumph for a season—for holy love conquers all, even death.

The face of the queen beamed with happiness. Smiles played upon her lips; greetings flashed from her eyes to the people standing at the roadside, and loudly cheering her. She reached her destination! There is Neustrelitz, there is the palace! At the gate stood the old grandmother who had charge of Louisa in her childhood, the old landgravine, now eighty years of age. She stretched out her arms toward the queen; she called with tender words for her foster-child, her Louisa! And Louisa rushed into the arms of her grandmother. They remained locked in a long embrace, weeping. The duke himself wiped tears from his eyes. Happiness also has tears, and sometimes sadness.

"Grandmother," whispered the queen, "I have wept a great deal in grief and anguish. Now I am weeping in delight, and my tears are praising God!" The queen was at home with her father, and under the roof of her ancestors. The storms of adversity had spent their fury. Gladness beamed from her face as she welcomed the friends and acquaintances of former times.

A brilliant party was given at court on the second day. A ball took place in the evening. Numerous guests were assembled in the festive halls; all were waiting for the arrival of the queen. Suddenly the folding-doors opened; she entered the ball-room leaning on her father's arm, and greeted the assembled guests. How beautiful she was! Her whole bearing had an indescribable mildness and majesty. She had adorned herself, for the first time since her adversity, as it became a queen. Her noble figure was wrapped in a white satin dress, and her bare arms and neck were magnificently adorned.

"Oh, queen, how charming you are to-day!" exclaimed one of her early friends, transported with admiration. "And how splendid these pearls are!"

"Yes!" said the queen, "they are. I value them very highly, and retained them when I was obliged to part with my other jewelry. Pearls are more suitable to me, for they denote tears, and I have shed many." And as the queen uttered these words, she started and pressed her hand against her heart. Was the death-worm there again? Was it penetrating her heart? Was it, after all, stronger than the queen? No! Louisa triumphed over it! Joy was in her face; merry words dropped from her lips, and she glided in the mazes of the dance.

And this day was followed by another of still

---

* Oh sleep! my darling baby, sleep!
And dream without a tear,
For loving angels round thee keep
Their watch, and God is near!
O baby mine,
Sweet dreams be thine!

If we as little children were,
The Lord would love us best;
Of such he said, with tender care,
Is heaven's eternal rest!
O baby mine,
Sweet dreams be thine!

greater happiness. The king came to see again his longed-for consort and take her back to her second home, his house, and heart. She was again united with her most faithful friend. She gazed with delight at his fine, manly countenance; she was proud of his regal form, and his constant and earnest love transported her with gratitude. As she looked toward the king, who was leaving the room with the duke, in order to look at the old palace church,—"Oh, George," she said to the hereditary prince, who had remained with his sister in the duke's sitting-room, "now I am altogether happy! I would like to repeat it to all of you!" And, as if these words were not sufficient, as if she ought to write them down—the queen hastened to her father's desk. She took a scrap of paper and a pen, and wrote in a hasty hand: "My dear father! I am very happy to-day as your daughter, and as the wife of the best of husbands. Louisa." * "So," she exclaimed, "I have written it down. My father will not find it to-day, for we shall immediately set out for Hohenzieritz; but when he returns the day after to-morrow, and steps to his desk, he will find this greeting from his Louisa, and it will gladden him, and—"

"Why do you start so suddenly, my sister? Your lips are quivering, and you look so pale! What ails you, dear sister?"

"It is nothing, brother—it is nothing! An insignificant passing pain in my heart; it was sudden, but it is nothing, it is over now. And if you love me, George, you will forget it. You will not mention it to any one, and, least of all, to my husband. They are already returning, our dear ones! Let us meet them!"

They went from Neustrelitz to Hohenzieritz, the charming country-seat of the duke on the shore of Lake Tollen. The carriages halted in front of the palace-gate; Louisa, leaning on the king's arm, entered; suddenly a shudder shook her frame; a mortal pallor covered her cheeks, and she clung convulsively to her husband.

"What ails you, Louisa? Why do you look so ill, and tremble so violently? What is the matter?"

"I am quite well, my beloved friend, but I am cold, and the air here seems close and oppressive to me; and it is as silent and lonely as if death were dwelling here. Come, let us go into the garden. Come!" She hastened into the life and sunshine of the garden. The color came to her cheeks again, and her eyes assumed their serenity. She walked with her husband through the long, delightful avenues, and accompanied him to the lake. It lay before them, beautiful Lake Tollen, shining like silver, and fringed with gigantic oaks.

"Oh, my dear Mecklenburg, my dear native country, how beautiful thou art!" exclaimed the queen, and an echo replied from the opposite shore, "Beautiful thou art!"

"The echo is right," said the king. "And, as I am gazing at you, you seem to me again the young princess whom I saw seventeen years ago for the first time. Your return to your native country has made you once more a girl."

"But the girl of seventeen years ago was not so happy as is the matron and mother of to-day," said the queen. "At that time I did not have you, my husband, nor my beloved children! I am younger in my heart to day than then, for love imparts and preserves youthfulness."

"God preserve you this youth, my Louisa, to the delight of myself and our children! But come, it is cool here by the lake, and you look pale again." They returned to the palace, and the queen spent in the midst of her family a day of unalloyed pleasure. The last day!

When the next morning's sun shone into the queen's bedroom, Louisa attempted to raise herself; her head fell back heavily, and she pressed her hands convulsively against her bosom, exclaiming: "Oh, my heart!" Poor queen! The death-worm was conquering!

"It is nothing!" she whispered to her husband, when the struggle was over. "Nothing but a cold!" she repeated, when the doctors, who had been called from Neustrelitz, came to her bedside.

It was a cold, but the queen was unable to leave her bed to accompany the king to Berlin, when, a few days afterward, pressing state affairs called him back to the capital. She was obliged to remain a few days at Hohenzieritz, in order to rest and recover her strength. But the few days became weeks. She was still ill, and suffered as she had never suffered. Often, in the night, when her friend Caroline von Berg was sitting at her bedside, she beckoned to her and whispered in her ear: "The conquering death-worm! Did I not tell you, Caroline, that it was attacking my heart? Oh, I would the king, my beloved husband, were with me!"

Couriers went to Charlottenburg to the king, and they came every day to Hohenzieritz and inquired in his name for Louisa's health. He himself was unable to come; he was also ill with fever, confining him to his bed.

* These were the last words the queen ever wrote. The king preserved the scrap as a sacred relic, and carried it constantly in his memorandum-book.

"And I am not with him!" lamented the queen. "I cannot nurse him, and smile away his cares! I am myself an object of anxiety to him! Oh, shall I not soon be well again? Tell me, dear Doctor Heim, you whom the king has sent, shall I not soon be well, that I may nurse my husband?"

"Yes, your majesty, if it please God, you will soon be well. But now let me deliver to you a letter from the king, which his majesty has intrusted to me."

Louisa's eyes beamed with joy; she opened the letter and read it. The words of tender love and ardent longing which the king addressed to her brought tears to her eyes. "What a letter!" she exclaimed. "How happy is she who receives such!" She kissed the paper and then laid it on her heart. "It shall remain there, and will cure me better than all your medicine, doctor. If the spasms would only leave me, I should be well! When they seize me, I cannot help thinking that my end is drawing nigh."

Doctor Heim made no reply; he turned and prescribed cooling beverages and anodynes. No one but God was able to help her. Her spasms became frequent and violent, and she often cried —"Air! air! I am dying!" She yearned more and more for her husband and children.

"Doctor! must I die, then? Shall I be taken from the king and from my children?" The doctor made no reply.

"My God, I am young to die!" groaned the queen. "Life has still to fulfil many promises to me; I have shed many tears and suffered much! Oh, there are these dreadful spasms again! Doctor, help me! Ah, nothing but death can help me!"

It was in the night of the 18th of July that the queen uttered these complaints to her physicians. It was a stormy night, and the gigantic trees in the garden of Hohenzieritz rustled weirdly and dark. The silence of the palace was broken only by low groans.

It was dawning when a carriage rolled into the palace-yard. The duke hastened out. A pale man alighted and rushed toward him. "How is she? How is Louisa?"

The duke was unable to make a reply. He took the king's arm and conducted him into the palace. The two sons of the king, who had arrived with their father, followed them in silence and with bowed heads. The duke conducted the king into his room, where he found the old landgravine and the three physicians of the queen.

Frederick William saluted the princess only with a silent nod; he then turned his quivering face toward the physicians. "How is the queen?" he asked. "What hopes have you?"

They made no reply, standing before him with gloomy faces and downcast eyes. The king's face turned livid, and, pressing his hand upon his forehead, covered with perspiration, he said, sternly and imperiously, "Reply to me, I want to know the truth! How is the queen? What hopes have you?"

"No hopes whatever, your majesty," said Dr. Heim, solemnly. "It is an organic disease of the heart, and in such cases our skill is powerless. The queen has but a few hours to live!"

The king staggered back to the wall. He neither spoke nor wept, so great was his sorrow. The venerable old landgravine went to him and laid her hand gently on his shoulder. "Hope still, my son," she said, solemnly, "Louisa still lives, and so long as she lives there is hope. God in His mercy may yet preserve her to us!"

The king shook his head despairingly. "Ah," he cried in a husky, sombre voice, "if she were not mine, she would live. But as she is my wife, she will surely die! But I will see her, I must see her! So long as she lives she belongs to me!"

"I will go and inform the queen that the king has arrived," said Heim, and hastened into the sick-room.

A few minutes elapsed, and Louisa's voice exclaimed: "My Frederick! my beloved husband, come to me!"

The king rushed to her room, the door of which had just been opened by Dr. Heim. The queen lay on her couch, pale and beautiful as a broken lily.

"My husband! my beloved friend!" she exclaimed, raising herself and endeavoring to stretch out her arms toward the king, who stood at her bedside, but alas, she was unable to do so. "Oh, whispered Louisa, sadly, "I am a queen, but cannot move my arms!"

The king bent over, and, pressing her against his breast, kissed her beloved face. Louisa smiled, laid her head on his shoulder and looked at him long and tenderly. "You are here! You are mine again! But how are the children? Have you come alone?"

"No," said the king, "our two oldest sons accompany me."

"My sons! Where are they?" exclaimed the queen. "Let me see them, oh, pray let me see my sons!"

Heim hastened out and returned with the Princes Frederick and William. With eyes filled with tears, they stepped on tiptoe to the bedside of the queen.

"My children!" exclaimed Louisa, in a loud, powerful voice, and she raised herself up. Her maternal love gave her strength to extend her arms.

"Oh, my children, my beloved children!" She pressed them to her bosom, kissing them with the passionate tenderness of a mother.

The two young princes, entirely overcome by grief, sank on their knees at the bedside of their mother. She laid her hands on their heads, as if to bless them, and lifted her eyes to the king, who, pale and silent, was gazing at her in unutterable despair.

"Now I am happy," breathed the queen. "You are with me, and my beloved sons!"

The king's sorrow was overpowering him, and he quickly turned and left the room. Heim approached the princes and begged them in a low voice to withdraw, because the queen was unable to bear so much excitement. They rose from their knees and kissed their mother's hands. Louisa was so faint that she could greet her children only with a smile, and was unable to bear their presence longer. But her eyes followed them steadfastly until they had withdrawn.

She lay long silent and motionless, and then whispered to her sister, the Princess of Solms: "The king acted as though he wished to take leave of me. Tell him not to do so, else I shall die immediately. But where is he? Where is my husband? Oh, why is he not with me?"

Frederick William stood in a corner of the anteroom, his head leaning against the wall, his hands pressed against his breast, in order to suppress the sobs which escaped from it in spite of him. His eyes were tearless; his quivering lips were murmuring: "My wife is dying! She is dying!"

"Louisa wishes to see you," whispered the Princess of Solms, approaching him. "But, pray be gentle; do not manifest your grief; Louisa says that else she would die immediately."

"No," said the king, sternly, "she shall not die. I will endeavor to be calm!" And, restraining his grief, he stepped to the queen's bedside. "I just had a conference with the physicians," he said, almost smilingly. "They make me hope for the best. Indeed, I never believed that you were in danger; I was only deeply moved because I saw you suffering so intensely."

The queen looked him full in the face, and made no reply. The king sat down on her bed and took her right hand. Louisa pressed his hand gently, and fixed her eyes with a thoughtful and grave expression on his countenance. Suddenly a dark shadow passed over her face. "It is coming! It is coming!" she cried in a tone of heart-rending anguish, and started up in excruciating pain.

The king went to the door and called the physicians, who hastened into the room, followed by the duke, the princes, and the whole family. Madame von Berg raised the groaning sufferer. The physicians were standing in the middle of the room. "We cannot help her. It is the last convulsion!"

"Air! air!" cried the queen.

Frederick William bent over her with tearless eyes. The agony she was suffering paralyzed his heart.

"Lord, end my sufferings!" cried the queen, with a last effort, and her head sank back into the arms of Madame von Berg. Another sigh—a long, tremulous sigh. The clock struck nine. A solemn silence reigned in the palace. The queen was dead!

THE END.

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